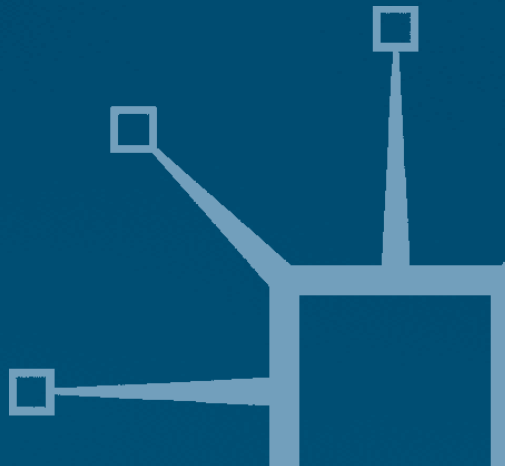


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Reinventing France

State and Society in the Twenty-First Century

Edited by
Susan Milner and Nick Parsons



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and

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The success of the conference would not have been possible, of course, without those who contributed papers and, while it has not been possible to include them all in this book for reasons of space and thematic consistency, we would like to thank all participants for providing intellectually stimulating papers that opened up new lines of thought to us. Even those whose work does not feature here have all contributed indirectly to the present book. To those whose work does feature, we owe a deep debt of gratitude for their patience in rewriting their contributions in order that they fit in with the themes treated here in a coherent manner, and in updating their work. What started out as a series of reflections on the way France faced the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century has become an appraisal (with the added benefit of hindsight) of France's ability to deal with change, and more specifically an overview of the period of the Jospin government which coincided with the transition to the new millennium.

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Introduction

Susan Milner and Nick Parsons

The dawn of the twenty-first century provided France, like other countries, with the opportunity to reflect on the past, assess the present and embrace the future. Typically, France welcomed the new millennium in style. At midnight on 31 December 1999, the Eiffel Tower, originally built for the 1889 World Exhibition, was illuminated by fireworks in an impressive display of computer-controlled pyrotechnic wizardry and the image was projected around the world using twenty-first century communications technology. In this way, France looked forward to the future with a mixture of the old and the new.

France's self-conscious use of spectacle to project an image of itself to the outside world and to its own citizens formed part of a wider process of reinvention of national identity. The year-long celebration to mark the new millennium, featuring Ferris wheels, arts festivals and a nationwide picnic on 14 July, sought to depict a socially diverse yet solidaristic France, aware of its special national identity in an era of globalization.¹ The World Cup, which had taken place on French soil the previous year, had similarly seen the French people rejoice in their victorious national team, made up of star players from diverse ethnic, local and social backgrounds: another image of national solidarity which the rest of the world could only envy.

Yet, by 2002, the French dream seemed to be falling apart. The high level of support for the far-right candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen and record levels of political disaffection seen in abstention rates and attitudinal surveys revealed deep social divisions. Far from celebrating Frenchness, the prevailing mood between the two rounds of the presidential elections was one of national shame and confusion. The outgoing government, which had earlier won admiration for its communicative strategy and clever mix of economic pragmatism

and social justice, was decisively rejected whilst the president secured re-election by default, amid continuing suspicions about his personal integrity.

What we propose to do in this book is to examine to what extent the orchestrated image of France in official spectacle – diversity, solidarity, urbanity and universalism – corresponds to reality, and to analyse the nature of changes in several important areas of policy-making and society. We aim to analyse the political response to social changes and assess how far French politicians have been able in recent years to ‘remake France’, that is, to steer the country at a time of rapid international change in a way which does not fatally undermine social cohesion.

The state, citizenship and society

The main focus that emerges in the following chapters concerns the notion of identity, not in terms of a cultural notion of what it means to be French or which ‘national characteristics’ define ‘Frenchness’, but in terms of the relationship between the state and its citizens, and the societal links and values that bind them together. Both the state and the idea of citizenship are central to notions of collective identity, and nowhere more so than in France.

Basic citizenship rights were acquired in several stages over a lengthy period of time in France, often after bloody confrontation. Thus, although the 1789 Revolution brought the rights to freedom (including of opinion and expression), private property and equality before the law, it was not until 1848 that universal male suffrage was introduced. Women had to wait nearly a further one hundred years, until 1946, before being granted the most fundamental of citizenship rights. It is through the conferring of these political, or citizenship, rights that the state identifies some as citizens, fully integrated into the body politic and the nation, and others as ‘foreigners’ or ‘outsiders’. The latter may be able to exercise some social and economic rights, such as receiving certain welfare benefits or seeking and taking up employment within the national territory, but they cannot exercise the fundamental political rights that would identify them as belonging to, and being fully integrated into, the national community.

In France, this sense of national community, or identity, has been constructed over time without regard to social class, wealth, ethnicity or religion. Thus, in theory at least, it is universalist in nature. It confers on all those considered to belong to the national collectivity,

in other words those considered to be French, without distinction, the same rights, including the political rights of standing for election and voting, and the same obligations, including, until recently, that of defending the nation through military service. The notion of citizenship is intended to overcome differences of background in order to bind individuals together in the nation, on the basis of national belonging which can be acquired (according to certain rules) by those who do not possess it by right of birth. Citizenship was also intended to provide a framework and discourse of equality within which the demands of particular social groups could be met and thus social conflict could be avoided: what Constant calls the 'miraculous equalization of social conditions'.²

The state in France has played a major role in constructing and moulding an identity that would transcend the deep political, social, economic and regional differences. In this sense, as Gregory Flynn argues, 'A powerful centralized state helped to bring a nation into being where none previously existed.'³ Hervé Le Bras and Emmanuel Todd have shown how France was created as a political project to unite an ethnically diverse population made up of successive generations of immigrants.⁴ Thus the state is intimately linked with the notion of citizenship and identity, conferring 'insider' and 'outsider' status on those living both within, and outside of the national territory. However, citizenship and French national identity have not always coincided, and citizens do not always have equal status, despite the declared universalism of the French republican tradition. The position of women before 1946, and the conferring of full political rights upon them, is one obvious example. Even today, as we shall see, equality before the law, although a central tenet of the republican values that serve as one of the binding agents of the French state, has not been achieved for all groups in society. This has led to debates around citizenship rights – conceived as individual rights – and their relationship to non-national forms of identity (gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age and lifestyle). Can a Republic which is constitutionally defined as 'one and indivisible' allow the institutionalized expression of identity and otherness within its boundaries? How does it ensure equality of treatment if it does not look specifically at the mechanisms of inequality which affect the way that individuals experience the workings of the state? Increasingly rapid demographic, social and cultural changes in the latter half of the twentieth century posed these questions with a new urgency.

The unity and indivisibility of the French state were also called into question territorially. Political decentralization had already begun in the 1970s but it was the left government's reforms in the early 1980s which signalled a major shift in French ways of doing politics. Although many commentators have downplayed the effect of decentralization, emphasizing the continuity of political elites and their integration into centrally-controlled mechanisms of decision-making, there can be no doubt that decentralization forms part of a wider shift in national politics, which political scientists like to portray as a move from government (top-down and largely autonomous) to governance (interdependent networks drawing in actors at different levels and in different spheres). At the same time, the national basis of identity was undermined at the end of the twentieth century by appeals to supra-national allegiance, or more importantly by public perception of a transfer of decision-making powers (state sovereignty) to European level and of the weakening of state power by the new power of multinational capital. Those fearful of the effects of economic and cultural 'globalization' called on the state to resist the erosion of national sovereignty and identity. Those who embraced the new search for international competitiveness called on the state to reform itself, to become less ambitious, to free up individual creativity. The state was summoned to find new ways of doing things: part of the problem, and also part of the solution.

Reinventing France

If the political class had, over time, 'invented' France, could it now 'reinvent' France in order to provide a new sense of collective purpose? The notion of reinvention can be considered from two possible angles, one rather negative and the other more positive in their conception of change. Firstly, 'reinvention' can imply that nothing really changes, that progress is more apparent than real, as in the phrase 'reinventing the wheel'. On the other hand, 'reinvention' can signify responsiveness to external change and an ability to adapt. Pop stars, and particularly those that achieve any longevity in the industry, for instance, are constantly reinventing themselves, changing their stage image, persona and style of music to keep up with latest trends. Reinvention in this sense implies an ability to adapt to a world which we know is characterized by constant change whilst retaining control of one's identity (as a market brand, in the case of pop stars). In the same way, the physical territorial entity of France, even some of its core institutions and

underlying values, may remain the same for some time after the start of the twenty-first century, but their interactions, nature and the uses to which they are put may change.

As the following chapters show, real change is indeed taking place within and around the old values and structures of France. In little over half a century, the country has been transformed from a largely agrarian economy and society trading mainly with colonial captive markets, to a modern, post-industrial one well and truly integrated into the global economy. Over 70 per cent of the employed workforce is in the tertiary sector, as successful high-technology and modern services sectors have replaced small-scale agriculture and industry as the main sources of employment and wealth. Trade patterns have shifted so that the EU is the main destination for exports and source of imports. Due to the arrival and subsequent settlement of immigrant communities, France is now a multicultural country.

In the political arena, over a longer time-span, there has been a shift from political instability and frequent lapses into authoritarian rule to a stable modern democracy with alternating left and right parties in government and the *cohabitation* of presidents and prime ministers from opposite sides of the political divide. Such political stability appeared problematic, however, even as recently as the late 1970s, when it was feared that the emergence of a left-wing political majority would plunge the country into constitutional chaos. However, the first Mitterrand presidency ensured that the Fifth Republic gained legitimacy in the eyes of the Left, and the regime now looks well on the way to beating the previous record for longevity for any French regime since 1789 – the seventy years (1870–1940) of the Third Republic. Sharp ideological divisions have given way over the last two decades to consensus over the market economy. Differences are now over points of detail, not over the nature and form of regime.

Accompanying these changes since the end of the 1970s, there has been a shift towards greater emphasis on European integration. Recognizing that the preservation of national *grandeur* and sovereignty may mean that these have to be pooled within a greater European whole, France has been at the forefront of moves towards greater political and economic integration. The Europe espoused by Mitterrand, which reached its culmination after the latter's death with the recent implementation of the euro, is a far cry from that defended by de Gaulle, with its accent on independence in the context of the Cold War. Indeed, de Gaulle would surely be alarmed at the loss of national sovereignty implied in the Maastricht Treaty, even if the

intergovernmental nature of the European defence and security policy and the notion of Europe as a 'superpower, not a superstate' fit a broadly Gaullist vision.

In short, France has modernized. Some aspects of this modernization can be considered to be a conscious (re)invention by governing elites, albeit within the confines of external constraints. Certainly, the remarkable economic performance of the country during the '30 glorious years' from the end of the war to the mid-1970s was due in part to world economic expansion, but it was also the fruit of deliberate industrial and economic strategies embodied in a system of five-year indicative plans. In the context of shared sovereignty and economic globalization, however, there may be less room for voluntaristic manoeuvring in this 'reinvention' than has been the case in the past.

Reinventing politics

In political science, 'reinvention' has a specific meaning in relation to policy innovation. Here, policy innovation is seen as a dynamic process: innovations are modified during implementation, in response to the experience of earlier adopters. Reinvention refers to purposeful changes made to innovations as they diffuse; in other words, it implies a learning process in politics.⁵

More generally, in the 1990s, politicians in all advanced economies spoke of the need to 'do politics differently' as they – implicitly or explicitly – assimilated the 'globalization' paradigm. The new era of international trade appeared to shift the parameters of political action.⁶ If the 1980s was the decade of neoliberalism (presided over by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher), the 1990s marked the beginning of a new consensus between centre-left and centre-right governments that political decision-making somehow had to be recast in response to new constraints. The 'reinvention' model originated in the United States with the election of Bill Clinton in 1993 and was closely associated with the 'Third Way' thinking propounded by the American New Democrats, and in the UK with sociologist Anthony Giddens and the reform of the Labour Party under Tony Blair.⁷

The Clinton–Gore 'reinvention' offensive, which began almost immediately, followed the analysis developed in a 1992 best-seller entitled *Reinventing Government* (by a journalist and a former city manager) of a fundamental shift in economics and society: 'The emergence of a postindustrial, knowledge-based, global economy has undermined old realities throughout the world, creating wonderful

opportunities and frightening problems. Governments large and small, American and foreign, federal, state and local, have begun to respond.⁸ The Democrats' search for new policy initiatives responded to specific national circumstances: electoral pressure on taxes and the inability to control the state's budget after the Republicans' Congress victory in 1994. In this context, the Osborne/Gaebler recipe for 'entrepreneurial government' (pragmatic and cost-effective) looked particularly attractive. Osborne and Gaebler offered examples of city managers finding private funding for leisure facilities or contracting out refuse collection, army officers obtaining supplies more quickly and cheaply by going straight to local producers, and new managerial practices in education, notably in deprived city areas. Terms like 'downsizing', 'reengineering' and 'continuous improvement' dominated the New Performance Review produced by Al Gore in September 1993.⁹ Durst and Newell, reviewing government reinvention in the US in the 1990s, note the entry of management terms and methods in public-sector organizations, and suggest the term 'reorganization' as synonymous with reinvention in this context.¹⁰ The state not only had to become more like a business in its thinking and methods, it had to rely increasingly on private companies to carry out its own work. Rather than simply replacing the state, as in the Thatcherite vision, however, the Democrats' initiative was intended to save the state through reform. Evaluation of the results of the 'reinvention' initiative was mixed, but it appears to have provided a mobilizing impetus. In this context, reinvention had some tangible results – mainly a trimming of administrative costs and of public sector personnel – and, perhaps most significantly, provided a legitimating discourse for change which might otherwise have been resisted.

In western Europe, the reinvention of politics has taken different forms, although it shares with the US experience an importing of managerial discourse and methods into the state's core functions. As in the US, the focus has been on reorganizing public services to make them leaner and more cost-effective. In many countries, France included, this has meant large-scale privatization of companies and the reduction of public sector provision, including in key areas such as social welfare. In many ways, the French socialists' U-turn in 1982–1983 preceded the US 'reinvention model' and was linked to the adaptation to power, in specific economic and political circumstances, of the social-democratic left. For France, the reorganization of public services implies a wholesale rethinking of the role of the state. According to an influential report published in 2001, this thinking has not yet gone far

enough.¹¹ There appear to be limits to state reform which reflect public attachment to key services (even the ultra-liberal Alain Madelin in the 1990s could not contemplate the privatization of energy), or powerful interest groups (public sector workers, particularly in transport and energy, and also in education, long described as the ‘mammoth’ which successive education ministers have tackled in vain), or perhaps even ingrained habits within the state apparatus itself. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that a modernizing agenda within the Socialist Party, particularly around Laurent Fabius (who in the late 1980s set up his own working group on public services) and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, is at work.

In western Europe, as opposed to the United States, the renewal of social democracy has focused not just on the state as provider of services alongside the private sector, but on the state as an economic actor. For the French government in the late 1990s, this meant a shift from the state as a strategic actor, shaping business choices and objectives through selective funding, to the state as regulator. As Giandomenico Majone notes, the regulatory state is a feature of capitalist societies in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.¹² The search for new forms of regulation was a major theme of the Jospin government at the start of the twenty-first century: it reinvents the republican model by circumscribing the role of the state, whilst at the same time distancing French socialism from the minimalist approach of Tony Blair’s New Labour Party.

As well as the reorganization of key functions, the reinvention of politics – in line with the development of ‘Third Way’ ideas – also concerns the renegotiation of the social contract between state and citizens. In this context, the ‘new’ politics seeks to respond to demographic and societal change by rethinking its family policies (in the face of massively expanded female labour market participation) and seeks to promote a more cosmopolitan, tolerant society. France may boast relatively good childcare provision, but it has been criticized by feminists for the low numbers of women in positions of political power, and for the failure to conceptualize family policies except in the traditional pro-natalist approach which ‘allows’ women to reconcile work and family without questioning the underlying sexual division of labour.¹³ Nevertheless, there are signs of change here too: in 1999, France changed its constitution to ensure equal numbers of men and women standing as candidates in elections (parity), and in 2001 the law was applied for the first time to municipal elections. Although the outcome in terms of number of female mayors

(particularly in the larger cities) did not amount to an overnight revolution, the longer-term consequences of the parity law – particularly if it encourages women into local party networks – may well have profound effects on the way politics is done in France.¹⁴

A new France for the new millennium?

The present book is organized around the themes outlined above. In the first part, the contributions outline some of the major challenges facing the French state – from above, from below, and from within – and present different perspectives on them. In addition, two chapters focus on the impact of European policies and contacts on political strategies and the organization of the state. In the second part, we look at key areas of society where social groups are challenging traditional conceptions of national identity, or where the state is actively attempting to forge a new social contract. Finally, in the third part we examine the way in which France faces its past. Writing in 1995, historian Richard Kuisel noted that France's obsession with the 'warm glow' of the past betrayed a deep unease about the future.¹⁵ Here, our contributions examine current historiographical debates and the political treatment of history in order to draw lessons about France's ability to come to terms with its own identity as a nation and a people.

Our collection shows a France in the process of change, but becoming more confident about how it can try to master the process through learning and adaptation. France's caution can often be irritating to its neighbours, but in seeking to adapt at its own pace and in tune with its own cultural references, it may be managing the reinvention process better than most.¹⁶

Part One: State and Nation

Given its centrality, the state would appear to be a logical place to start any examination of the reinvention of France. Before subsequent contributors analyse the ways in which the state has, and should, change to face up to the challenges of the twenty-first century, however, David Hanley takes us on an historical detour to compare the challenges facing France now and in 1900. The lesson appears necessary and salutary, since it serves as a reminder that history is characterized by continuity as much as it is by change. Hanley argues that any reinvention of France is unlikely to be wholesale, but rather piecemeal and incremental. The lesson from 1900 appears to be that societies rarely develop in a controlled, rational manner, as actions often have

unintended consequences. This seems all the more true today, argues Hanley, as although ideological conflict and divisions over the identity of France were sharper between left and right, republicans and reactionaries, in 1900, this to some extent made conflict more manageable than it is today. Politicians today may have more information at their disposal, but society is more fragmented, and protest more diffuse. While this poses a problem of integration and of identity within the republican framework at the domestic level, internationally French identity is being eroded by the sharing of sovereignty that is the necessary corollary of European integration.

Indeed, as Jack Hayward points out, European integration has blurred the distinction between domestic and external policy constraints, weakening the capacity of the French state to act decisively in its core areas of intervention: economic, social and defence policy. In defence, there has been a loss of independence via integration into NATO and EU forces; in the economy, indirect methods of regulation of private business have replaced nationalization and *dirigiste* economic control under the twin pressures of globalization and EU policy demands; welfare state provision is threatened, not only by demographic change, but also by an EU monetary policy that requires reduced budget deficits. In Hayward's analysis, then, the state must become more modest in order to retain its legitimacy by reducing expectations of what it can do. Like Hanley, however, he is pessimistic that this can be done in a rational manner. Firstly, state bureaucratic elites are divided, while politically the state is weakened by multi-party government and *cohabitation*. Secondly (and here again the weight of history is important), the cultural and structural heritage of the authoritarian Jacobin state militates against the acceptance of political and economic liberalism whereby the role of the state becomes one of regulation to ensure social justice rather than one of direct economic management.

Pierre Sadran also identifies a shift away from the state's role as economic entrepreneur and even regulator of society, towards its core (monarchic) functions. The monolithic state has given way to a fragmented polity, particularly as the process of change itself is uneven and opposing forces within the state itself are at work. Sadran notes two strategies in the face of external pressures for change: the first, which he dubs the strategy of the 'leopard' (after Lampedusa's famous novel), consists of 'changing so that things remain the same', a deliberate strategy of controlled adaptation which keeps elites in place; the second strategy is to carry out reforms whilst appearing to change as

little as possible, in order to conserve energy and resources for the long haul (as a camel conserves water). The first strategy may be seen in certain sections of the public administration, the second in Lionel Jospin's governmental practice. Reinvention in this context consists of responding to the need for fundamental change, whilst tailoring the message to suit internal political or tactical requirements. As Sadran emphasizes, the process of change is far from complete and the effort of inventing or reinventing still requires considerable political will.

Although European integration may imply some erosion of national sovereignty, national government–EU relations cannot be conceived of in terms of one-dimensional dynamics. The EU is a collective construction of nation-states, all of which have an input into its policies and processes. Thus, David Howarth argues that while European integration may undermine the capacity of the central state to act in the economic sphere, the political position of the state in France has paradoxically been reinforced vis-à-vis sub-national units of government, even to the point of reasserting its control over several policy areas devolved to local authorities by the 1980s decentralization reforms. With its technical expertise, the state plays a gatekeeper and coordinating role as far as the application for, and implementation of, EU funds is concerned, determining national priorities in the allocation of funds earmarked for France through a revamped regional and national planning process. As the state is the sole legal representative of French interests in the EU policy-making and legislative process, European regional policy, far from undermining the French state, fits quite well with French traditions of *dirigisme*, indicative planning and integrated economic development. Once again, Howarth draws our attention to the weight of history in suggesting that the Jacobin tradition may make France more resistant than her European partners to further decentralization. Although it is not possible to identify a relocation of decision-making to the European level, however, Howarth demonstrates that a reformulation of governance has taken place, in which sub-national authorities (regions and communes) act alongside national decision-makers.

Echoing Howarth, Jean-Marc Trouille argues that France has managed economic integration in order to preserve some sovereignty in macroeconomic policy. As a previously de facto member of the Deutschmark zone, France could not implement an independent monetary policy, but has now regained some sovereignty by pooling it in institutions which dilute German influence. Whilst the Franco-German alliance was crucial for the construction of Europe in the twentieth

century, however, the twenty-first century has seen the relationship severely tested. In particular, eastward enlargement of the EU is likely to weaken the political leadership of the Franco-German axis, but Trouille sees opportunities for strategic trilateral partnerships to lead the new Union. Reinvention in this context implies an incremental process of mutual learning, as well as the ability to adapt to changed power relationships. Formal institutions can help to maintain mutually beneficial relations even during adverse political circumstances, whilst the security of a bilateral and regional partnerships gives France an advantage in an internationally competitive environment.

Part Two: State and Society

Sociologically, France has changed in the post-war period, particularly in terms of the ethnic origins of its population. The immigrants that were originally thought to have entered the country on a temporary basis, to help with the post-war reconstruction effort, have remained and settled in France, producing offspring that have been able to claim French nationality by dint of being born in France. As the post-war waves of immigration came largely from north African countries with different beliefs, customs and practices – particularly religious ones – France has had to face up to the difficulties of assimilating and integrating these new immigrant populations and their descendants. France has thus become a multicultural country, with Islam challenging Catholicism as the dominant religion of the country. The rise among distinct ethnic groups of an Islamic identity at odds with both Catholicism and the secular state has challenged some aspects of the universalist concept of French citizenship. This was seen starkly, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in the debates surrounding the wearing of the veil by Muslim girls in French schools.

Such affirmations of particular cultural and ethnic identities challenge universalist and assimilationist republican values. In metropolitan France, the immigration question has been a national obsession since the *Front national's* (FN) electoral breakthrough in the 1983 Dreux by-election. Michèle Tribalat argues that it is precisely the presence of the FN that prevents a proper national debate on the question from taking place in France, and this is seen as dangerous for the survival of republican values. In effect, the ethnic dimension of social problems is rendered taboo as the FN has recuperated this ground for itself. There is great need for this debate, however, as the lack of integration of populations of foreign origin, particularly north African, renders communitarian, especially fundamentalist Islamic, identities all the more attractive to the

socio-ethnically excluded who are pushed out to the rundown suburbs of large towns. Indeed, the debate is all the more urgent as the problems of integrating these populations do not stem from insurmountable cultural differences and practices as the evidence shows a convergence towards 'French' norms in language, family structure and religious behaviour with the passing of the generations. Rather, the problems stem from the failure of republican institutions, and foremost amongst them the education system, to promote equality, particularly where labour market access is concerned. The resultant disaffection of the young French *maghrébin* (of North African origin) population for republican values and the concomitant recourse to anti-social behaviour both feeds and feeds off discriminatory practices. Republican universalist and egalitarian values are thus undermined from both sides by the failure of republican institutions.

One response to the perceived failure of the education system has been the development of 'citizenship education'. Producing citizens that are integrated into society has been an aim of the education system since the Third Republic, but it has received more attention in recent years as perceived violence in schools is seen as indicative of a system, and therefore a Republic, in crisis. As Hugh Starkey points out, anti-school violence is seen as disaffection for the Republic given the key socializing role of the school in the dissemination of republican values. Echoing Tribalat, Starkey sees an ethnic dimension to this, with children of foreign origin stigmatized through streaming, often on the basis of knowledge of the French language, and therefore developing a counter-school culture. The result is once again a threat to universalist republican discourse. The education system is responding to such challenges not only through citizenship education, which is centred around knowledge of republican values and human rights, French institutions and the rules and norms of life in society. Over and above such formal instruction, the notion of effective citizenship education demands a radical transformation of schools from centralized, authoritarian institutions to pupil-centred ones which encourage student participation and engagement within a republican framework that allows for local autonomy and the needs of individual pupils to be catered for. Once again, the promotion and survival of a republican political philosophy are paradoxically equated with decentralization and a respect for differences that enable the goal of equality to be at least approached if not achieved.

It is not only in schools, of course, that the rules of democratic participation that are central to French republicanism, at least in

theory, can be learnt. In wider society, too, they can help overcome the disaffection that undermines republican institutions in France. Sharon Collins argues that the 'political crisis' in France is one of representation rather than one of political action per se: French citizens are disillusioned with national political institutions, parties, unions and figures, and look to other means of making their voices heard. There is thus a democratic deficit in France requiring a shift from passive to active citizenship. In a case study of Nîmes, Collins shows how the municipality has attempted to involve its citizens, including the young, in the decision-making process through the development of consultative mechanisms. This did not imply the transfer of power from local elites to the public, but an increase in the political expression, involvement and control of the latter. It was seen as fostering a closer relationship between local political representatives and their electorate, and, crucially, a greater trust in the former by the latter. Thus, experiments in democratic renewal and a redefinition of the relationship between citizenship and politics have been taking place at the local level in France. The Nîmes case study, however, points to the problems such experiments will encounter, particularly in the tension between the slowness of consultative decision-making processes and the wish for rapid and effective action. Furthermore, there is a risk of a deleterious effect on republican institutions if such renewal is not replicated, or does not spread to the national political level, held in such high disregard by French citizens.

The reinvention of social relations in order to foster a new kind of citizenship is not confined to the political sphere, but is also occurring in the economic and social spheres. Thus, as Marie-Christine Kok Escalle shows, the implementation of the 35-hour week at the start of the new millennium in France was not only about tackling the country's severe unemployment problem. Government information campaigns, aimed at all citizens, and an insistence on the negotiated implementation of the reform have tried to give everyone a sense of responsibility and involvement in a social project that aims to change the balance between work and free time. Through the negotiated reduction of working time, an appeal is made to social solidarity in an attempt to build a more cohesive society. Those that are economically excluded through unemployment find jobs, while those in work gain by having more free time, and business gains in productivity through the modernization and reorganization of work provoked by the need to reorganize working time. Thus, economic efficiency is wedded to social inclusiveness: an inclusive form of citizenship is put to the fore

through the notion of job-sharing and solidarity in a new social contract based on employment flexibility in which both workers and employers are supposed to be winners. All this is underpinned by a renewed emphasis on social dialogue as a means to bring about social consensus. The success of this societal project, however, is still in the balance. Greater free time, Kok Escalle argues, looks like being spent, not on the solidaristic social and political activities that would renew social links in an atomized society, but in an individualistic manner dependent upon pre-existing material and cultural resources. Rather than fostering a more participative and cohesive citizenship, the result may only be an exacerbation of social fragmentation and inequalities, especially for women, for whom the notion of 'more free time' may often merely mean more time to do the housework.

Part Three: History and Identity

This last section of the book also brings us full circle in that, once again, the weight of the historical legacy on the future of France can be clearly appreciated. Indeed, tensions surrounding the notion of universalism in the modern French Republic also come to the fore when looking at France in historical perspective, especially when, as is the case in our final two chapters, the Second World War is the period under scrutiny. In his examination of wartime commemoration, Michael Martin argues that, in the 1980s and 1990s, France saw the rise of a human rights-based ideology and of community-based identities which together undermined the Gaullist myth of a united French nation at war with Germany. The result was seen in a shift from national to community-based commemoration, as the unified model proved incapable of subsuming diverse wartime experiences. Thus, the French nation, under the first Chirac presidency, came to accept responsibility for the anti-Semitic crimes of Vichy. In doing so it has opened itself up to compensation claims from victims, and, more importantly in the long term, it has implicitly recognized the existence of an identifiable ethnic group within the 'one and indivisible' French nation.

Similar concerns are also prevalent in the chapter by Hanna Diamond and Claire Gorrara. They show how a re-evaluation of the wartime role of two important figures reveals the way in which current developments in historiography are challenging the notion of a nation united in opposition to the fascist enemy. First, a questioning of the allegiances and role of Jean Moulin – hitherto seen as the unifier of the Resistance movement – has led to a questioning of the 'heroic' Gaullist

myth of the Resistance. Second, the trial of the former Vichy official Maurice Papon contributed to a re-evaluation of the role of the French state in Hitler's Final Solution. The result does not only have consequences for the interpretation – or reinterpretation – of history, it has also been an undermining of the moral legitimacy of the state as the incarnation and upholder of core values at the heart of French identity: those of human rights, liberty and democracy.

From the disciplinary perspectives of history, political science and sociology, the contributions in our book reveal a country trying to cope with change and manage it in ways least likely to disrupt overall social cohesion, even at the expense of the legitimate demands of particular groups. The response of the state appears crucial: sometimes encouraging change, often attenuating or diverting change. Political change has been slow. In 2002, it was remarked by external media commentators that France stood out among Western countries for the longevity of its main election contenders, sparking fears about a failure to renew political leadership. Nevertheless, significant institutional change had occurred: most notably, the introduction of the five-year presidential term (the '*quinquennat*') and moves to reduce the number of political posts held by politicians. In electoral politics as more generally, apparent continuity can hide real underlying change. Our final chapter reviews the evidence from the contributions and discusses the future prospects for change in France.

Notes

1. M.F. Leruth, 'Themes of the French Year 2000 celebration', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 9/4 (2001), 467–82.
2. F. Constant, *La citoyenneté* (Paris: Monchrestien, 2000), p. 37.
3. G. Flynn, 'Remaking the Hexagon', in G. Flynn (ed.), *Remaking the Hexagon*, (Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 1–16.
4. H. Le Bras and E. Todd, *L'Invention de la France* (Paris: Hachette, 1981).
5. See J.-F. Bayart (ed.), *La réinvention du capitalisme. Les trajectoires du politique* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1994).
6. S. P. Hays, 'Influences on Reinvention during the Diffusion of Innovations', *Political Research Quarterly*, 49/3 (1996), 631–50.
7. A. Giddens, *The Third Way: the Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).
8. D. Osborne and T. Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (New York: Plume, 1992), p. xvi.
9. D.F. Kettl and J.J. Dilulio, Jr (eds), *Inside the Reinvention Machine* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995).

10. S.L. Durst and C. Newell, 'Better, Faster, Stronger. Government Reinvention in the 1990s', *American Review of Public Administration*, 29/1 (1999), 61–76
11. R. Fauroux and B. Spitz (eds), *Notre État. Le livre vérité de la fonction publique* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2000). See also C. Bébéar, *Le Courage de Réformer* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2002).
12. G. Majone, *Regulating Europe* (London: Routledge, 1996).
13. On this, and the pressure from the European Commission for a new type of policy approach, see D. Méda, *Le temps des femmes. Pour un nouveau partage des rôles* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001).
14. See special issue on gender parity: S. Dauphin and J. Praid (eds), *Modern and Contemporary France*, 10/1 (2002).
15. R. Kuisel, 'The France We Have Lost: Social, Economic, and Cultural Discontinuities', in G. Flynn (ed.), *Remaking the Hexagon*, pp. 31–48.
16. See, for example, G. Walden, 'France Says No', *Prospect* (October 1997), 20–4. If anything, the British view of France as portrayed in the press moved from triumphalism to envy in the early twenty-first century.

Part One

State and Nation

1

French Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Invention or Muddling Through?

David Hanley

This volume has as its theme the reinventing of France in the early years of the new millennium. The theme is vast and ambitious; but one must admit to feeling unease at the notion of societies inventing their futures, doubtless because it suggests a rational and controllable process of social development. On the face of it, one should not be worried by such a prospect. After all invention is going on constantly across a vast number of different areas of social life, many of which are explored in other chapters. Science and technology are the most obvious loci of invention; so too are the domains of culture, ideas and the arts; so indeed is actual social praxis (what we sometimes untidily refer to as social movements – feminism, ecologism, identity politics). It is only when one turns to the area of politics that doubts begin to set in. The task of politics (that means the task of politicians) is to manage conflicts and tensions within their society, essentially by guaranteeing the rule of law and by judicious use of public policy in order to smooth off the rough edges of social tension. It is a tough job and a thankless one; it is not certain that it leaves a great deal of scope for invention. It seems that the qualities required of a politician are more those of the plumber or mechanic than those of the sophisticated theorist or philosopher. Politicians fix things when they are broken (sometimes before, if they are alert); they are not on the whole great creators. Usually politicians do not anticipate problems, but react to them when they appear, often in a fairly short-term way; this is less a question of invention than of sticking-plasters. This is not of course to say that politicians do not attempt to invent and to foresee developments; party manifestos are replete with such claims, and think tanks continue to provide employment for PhD holders. Politicians even attempt to set agendas and create expectations within society (what Dunleavy

calls preference-shaping strategies);¹ but when they do attempt to invent like this, what sort of results do they get? Is the outcome always that predicted by logic and reason?

Such doubts are bound to assail anyone attempting to look at how French politicians might invent a political style for the new millennium. But there is a further problem to be overcome before one can start to speculate. A title like this one is an open invitation to do some crystal-ball gazing and try to say what French politics will look like in a few years' time. This is a temptation to be resisted, especially if one is used to thinking historically. A better idea seems to be to look back to the last time France confronted a change of century, around 1900; this was not a millennium to be sure, but it is near enough in time to be relevant. It is possible to assess what French political preoccupations for the new century were then, and then try and see if there are any similarities with today. There is a danger of anachronism of course. No one in 1900 used concepts like reinventing; the republican bourgeois of the time would have been very surprised to hear that they had actually invented quite a successful means of managing a particularly difficult polity, never mind talk of reinvention for a new century! They would simply have claimed to be applying elementary scientific principles based on Reason.

But leaving aside terminology for the minute, the France of 1900 clearly faced a number of political questions as it entered the new era. These questions were answered in a way which we can with hindsight identify. This chapter attempts to map out this process and see if it bears any relevance to the situation today. The initial assumption was an optimistic one, namely that beneath some very obvious differences between 1900 and now, there may perhaps be some similarities or even continuities; it is not necessary to be a total historicist to believe that analysis of the past can sometimes illuminate the present.

The France of 1900

We will look first at France in 1900. What sort of society was it? What challenges did it face?

It was a very tightly structured society. It had a large rural sector (46 per cent of the workforce in 1896); a small emergent working class, still scattered and relatively unorganized and self-conscious; a large middle group of urban tradespeople and professionals, including an emergent public sector (Gambetta's *nouvelles couches*);² and at the pinnacle a solid bourgeoisie, still very homogeneous, which controlled the

levers of economic and cultural power and was still highly influential politically, even though the republican *nouvelles couches* would increasingly provide the political elites. Outside the pyramid were the remaining aristocrats and rural *grands notables* (landowners or other capital owners, economically and culturally dominant in their area) who had never accepted democracy, marvellously described by Siegfried; relatively few in number, their influence was nugatory outside the few areas they controlled.³ Most of these groups were uninterested in change or modernization, certainly not economic or societal: hence the stigma of *société bloquée* (stalemate society) which is often reserved for this era. Politically, the Third Republic had developed a system which suited most of these groups most of the time; Hoffmann speaks of a 'republican synthesis'.⁴ The system was one of parliamentary government (*parlementarisme absolu*), where the chamber of deputies was all-powerful, and short-lived coalition governments were secreted from a constellation of weak parties; some types of weakness can be a source of strength, however.⁵ These governments did what most of the (male) electorate wanted, that is, not very much; they maintained order and the rule of law and presided over a heavily liberal market economy (give or take some protectionism). Few wanted government to do much more; the socialists wanted welfarist intervention (failing a complete socio-economic transformation), but they did not count for much. Radicalism wanted a hardline secularist agenda and eventually won; but it agreed with most of the political class on the majority of socio-economic questions.

Agreement about the limited scope of government did not of course exclude sharp divergence of value systems. We tend to sloganize the main opposition as left versus right, or republicans versus reactionaries; but this subsumes many other antagonisms. Certainly the clash between democrats and authoritarians tended to run parallel to that between *laïcs* (committed secularists) and Catholics, despite efforts on both sides to bridge the gap (but politicians soon worked out that there was much more mileage in pouring oil onto ideological flames than in trying to douse them with common sense); it was far too easy for activists on both sides to appeal to gut instincts. ('Keep out the atheists' was the slogan at election time in Catholic areas; or 'eradicate superstition', if one was speaking to a Radical audience.) It was quite logical that during the Dreyfus affair the daily newspaper *La Croix* which took an authoritarian and nationalist, even racist line (the paper has changed somewhat since those days!) should have as a counterpoint fire-eating speeches by Clemenceau or Viviani.⁶ This was simply

because of the century of mutual hatred and mistrust that had built up between Catholics and secularists since 1790.⁷ This division of left and right – at once cultural, political and above all *passionnel* (rousing strong emotions) – overrode other very real divisions in France, such as social class, which were plain for all to see. Yet the political forces that attempted to express these class divisions (the socialist party or even the Radicals⁸) found themselves sucked into the republican/reactionary paradigm – often quite willingly, it must be said.

Powerful ideological polarization existed, then, between left and right. Left and right did however commune in a notion of Frenchness; it was not quite the same, but this was not so important as one might think. Both saw Frenchness as involving membership of an old, powerful and civilized country, destined to play a leading role in the world, indeed to rule over large (non-white) parts of it. It did not matter too much that the republican saw France as the embodiment of equality, reason, science and progress or that the Catholic saw France as being all about hierarchy, tradition and Christian values. That argument could be settled between them, in the political field. Both knew that there was a French identity.

This all-too-brief consideration of French society and its values enables us to identify what the big preoccupations were as the century moved to its close. At the risk of simplification, and of upsetting the socialists, there were two: the political issues around the Dreyfus case at home, and abroad the eternal question of France's place in the world (or to put it more crudely, what to do about the Germans?). Together these issues would provide a litmus test for the ability of the political class to invent a new politics for the twentieth century.

Dreyfus has gone down in history as an exemplary confrontation of individual versus state; justice and right are said to have overcome bureaucratic tyranny.⁹ Without detracting from this aspect, the episode is much more significant for the way in which it settled the shape of French political development for much of the twentieth century. As the affair fermented, the political temperature rose; more accurately it was stoked up by political forces. On the right, the hardliners, coalescing around *La Croix*, thought it was time for one last fling against *la gueuse* – the beggarwoman, as right-wingers unkindly called the Republic; they managed to suck into their campaign a lot of moderate Catholic opinion which was by now working quite happily within the republican framework. On the left, Radicalism and most of mainstream republicanism, coalescing around the Waldeck-Rousseau government, now thought it possible and necessary to complete the move against

the Church, to finish off the educational reforms of Ferry and Bert with full-blooded separation.¹⁰ It is very questionable whether a majority of the French people wanted this at the outset of the new century, but that is what they got.

The political entrepreneurs in charge of these so-called weak embryonic parties (in fact groups of like-minded deputies clustering in parliament under labels such as *gauche républicaine* or *républicains de gauche*, to distinguish between which a very subtle awareness of political nuances is required) succeeded in perpetuating a very ideological style of politics predicated on the old left/right confrontation.¹¹ By their efforts they thus stymied the famous *conjonction des centres* or *ralliement* to give it its 1890s name; by that is meant the coming together of Catholic moderates and republican ones, each willing to downplay their ideological preferences (about the type of regime or official values) in the name of social conservation, which had been the dream of bourgeois conservatives ever since 1870, when the defeat of the authoritarian Second Empire had ushered in an era of democratic politics. The parties, especially the emergent Radicals, thus defined the shape of political conflict for years to come; they made the cultural left/right divide into the matrix of politics, at the expense of divisions of social class. They set the political agenda and when in office pursued preference-shaping strategies. They did so because they thought that there was more political mileage in this than in policies of social convergence or in downplaying ideological quarrels, which would diminish the chance of being re-elected. Republican politicians were talking to an electorate whose reflexes they had helped to condition by years of sectarian sloganizing. If we really wanted to stretch a point, we might say that to an extent the republican political class of 1900 invented a future of sorts; but it might be more accurate to say that they perpetuated and reinforced a political style that was already set and which they had helped establish.

Unfortunately as the interwar years would show, this paradigm of politics was not well suited to a France that had increasingly to cope with social and economic change that came much more rapidly than before 1900. In the 1920s and 1930s what was needed was a clear choice in politics between an intelligent conservative pole and a socially progressive one which would express the demands of the growing popular classes for social reform and for economic policies that went beyond unflinching defence of sound money; such a polarity might also have offered clearer choices in foreign policy. This was never to happen, because the old ideological quarrels persisted and

overlaid the newer, more dynamic socio-economic clashes; the poor Radical Party lay at the heart of this contradiction, mixing up old value-clashes with new ones, thinking it was on the left and behaving like the more timorous parts of the right. In the famous debacle of the *cartel des gauches* after 1924, the real issue was the power of financial interests and how government might face up to them. But Herriot's main concern remained the bread and butter of republican politics: trying to stop the concordat being maintained in Alsace and breaking diplomatic relations with the Vatican.¹² Ideological quarrels became a substitute for relevant political action. But that was what kept the militants together and rallied tribal reflexes; much of politics is about such rallying, though we are usually ashamed to admit it. If ideological republican politics had once been an invention, then it was one which had run well past its sell-by date after World War I.

The other major issue at the turn of the century was France's place in the international system. By 1900 France had acquired a large empire, largely by default or by the actions of economic and political entrepreneurs setting their own agenda in Africa; apart from the farsighted or interested few like Ferry or Etienne, most of the political class were indifferent or hostile.¹³ The main preoccupation remained: how to face up to Germany and if possible win back the *départements* lost in 1871. The public was concerned about this issue; every schoolchild was taught about it from day one. But specialist knowledge of the dossier and active interest were confined to a minute few; even deputies had other things to do (writing recommendations, getting exemptions and so on). The republicans had, mainly through Barthou, put together an alliance with Russia, which was unpopular because Russia was an autocracy; but the deal stuck. One of the less noticed but vital consequences of the Dreyfus case was that foreign policy was to be entrusted for several years to Delcassé (a man from the *gauche radicale*, who occupied the space between mainstream republicans and the Radical Party), who used his tenure to develop secret accords with Italy and the 1904 Entente with Britain.¹⁴ Few realized the significance of this process, which was never properly debated; the political class was much more interested in the anti-clerical struggle and local constituency business. No one really knew what the deal involved in terms of joint commitment in case of an actual crisis in international relations. So France effectively became stitched almost unbeknown into a four-armed alliance which gradually faced up to the Triplice or Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey). The events of 1914 would show how dangerous this was, as the alliances gradually ground into

action and a war unrolled that no one seemed to have the mechanisms to prevent. If this type of foreign policy can be called a political invention, then it was down to a small clique within the political class, which carried on with the benign ignorance or unconcern of the rest. And clearly its consequences were the opposite of what was intended.

So what was the balance sheet of political invention around 1900? In domestic politics, the France of 1900 was about to reinforce a political system for managing its conflicts which was arguably going out of date and should have been allowed to do so. And in the international arena, the country was sleepwalking into a highly dangerous system of alliances which would have a disastrous payoff a decade later. In the circumstances, it seems hard to talk of inventing anything for the new century; it was more a question of undergoing processes which were established and with which republican politicians felt comfortable. This was how politics was conducted in 1900; ritual set-piece exchanges on the left/right axis to identify you to the voters, then once in office try and deliver a few goods to your people. There was nothing heroic or bold or far-seeing about it. To say this is not to moralize or to blame the politicians for not having the insights available to people in 2000; they were men of their time. Few of their voters expected more from them; by their behaviour they had helped make the voters like that. But this evidence from 1900 does raise questions about the ability of any politician to invent the political future.

The France of 2000 and the political future

One may ask if it is any different at the beginning of the twenty-first century. On the face of it, differences are immense. The compact shape of the society of 1900 has long since exploded. Industrialization has been and gone; France long ago moved into a post-industrial society where knowledge and technology, investment strategy and marketing are more important than manual labour and where increasingly the workforce is tertiarized. The social strata seem more fragmented than ever. The working class, vastly shrunk, is riven by internal divisions: skilled versus unskilled, public sector versus private, full-time versus part-time, male versus female, native born versus immigrant. The peasantry has shrunk down to a few per cent, despite rearguard actions. The middle groups are more numerous than ever but highly diversified in terms of occupations, lifestyles and resources. The upper reaches of society have changed, with leaders from business and the professions being supplemented (supplanted?) by ubiquitous *énarques*. The politi-

cal class is no longer headed by the likes of Raymond Poincaré or René Waldeck-Rousseau, bright lawyers from the Paris Bar, but state-trained elites like Jospin, Juppé, Rocard or Chirac.¹⁵ Unlike the France of 1900, this is a society which cannot resist change; it is no longer insulated from the pressures of the global economy, though those groups which fear losing out to the forces of modernity still make their voices heard. Nevertheless, change is a mantra; its necessary and positive aspects are constantly talked up as if to insulate us against its effects.¹⁶

The value system of this society also seems increasingly fluid. Whereas 1900 pitted republicans against reactionaries, the picture is far from simple today. Of the great historical belief systems, organized religion has declined exponentially. Islam is currently the most vigorous of the religions. Maybe 8 or 9 per cent of the population are practising Catholics of some very loose sort; to illustrate the declining hold of religion we can perhaps refer to one comparator from 1900, which is still with us, namely *La Croix*. While the daily was standard fare for the mass of Catholics in 1900, to buy *La Croix* today has been likened to 'an act of militancy'. Even on the other side of the coin, the republican ethic is no longer what it was, despite frenetic attempts since the Mitterrand years to refurbish it. Increasingly, the inclusive, integrationist message of old-style republicanism, a community of citizens with a shared identity and common solidarity, falls on deaf ears, whether it be those who lose out in economic progress or the victims of years of policy failure in the city suburbs or indeed activists in peripheral regions such as Corsica pursuing their own agendas. The dialogue of the deaf in the 1995 film *La Haine*, where the three youthful protagonists, all from minority backgrounds, brush aside attempts at mediation by well-meaning local council officials, is an elegant metaphor for the loss of the integrative power of republicanism. What is striking in some ways is the diffuse and rather muted nature of value conflict today. There is still a left and a right, but it is not as clear as in the good old days when the clericals lined up against the republicans; as Gérard Grunberg and Elisabeth Schweisguth and others show, today's left-right polarity pits supporters of solidarity and 'cultural liberalism' on the one hand against more individualist and market-oriented believers on the other, possibly with a greater attachment to traditional values.¹⁷ But these oppositions are very crude and often criss-cross, as seen in major debates like that surrounding the Pacte Civil de Solidarité (PACS) aimed at giving homosexual couples the same legal rights as heterosexual couples. Compared with 1900, there are not the same ideological certainties which enable people to fit into

one camp and feel a strong identity; it is a far looser type of society with much more floating identities. As such it may well be much harder to manage than the France of 1900; it is doubtless much harder to invent the style and the policies which will keep it coherent.

So at the outset of the millennium what challenges does this new France face? Bizarrely the picture is in some ways similar to 1900, in that there seem to be two main challenges, inseparable from each other in fact: one relates to questions of internal political/social balance and the other to questions of identity about France's place in the world. In the managementspeak beloved of the political class and of social science today, solutions to such problems can be (re)invented. *A priori* there are some grounds for optimism. The political elite is a lot better equipped in some ways. Its multidisciplinary training and often high degrees of specialization should give it the edge over the republican lawyers of 1900 who knew their constitutional law textbooks but had to leave policy details to the civil servants. Today's political leaders have vast back-up services and information from a bewildering variety of sources, official and unofficial, about social and political reality (Carcassonne says that a deputy sees 90 pieces of paper for each bill that goes through parliament).¹⁸ In order to form judgements about how to act in the national interest, the politicians no longer need to rely on the vibrations picked up in the local café by the republican deputy for Basses-Alpes or Ariège. Above all, politicians today are armed with historical knowledge; they know the underlying realities and continuities of French society and can presumably avoid pitfalls. Let us see how they get on with inventing the politics of tomorrow.

To take the international dimension first, France has in fact deployed considerable powers of invention here. Since World War II she has had to come to terms with losing an empire and world-power status, and with attempting to define a role in a context shaped for decades by the Cold War. The Gaullian heritage is well known; but its most lasting feature is likely to be not the gesturing about NATO but the Franco-German relationship. By committing heavily to the European Community then to the European Union, France found a lasting solution to the permanent German problem: a succession of 'Franco-German couples' (De Gaulle-Adenauer, Giscard-Schmidt and Mitterrand-Kohl) established a dual leadership within Europe which set the agenda for others (see Jean-Marc Trouille in Chapter 4). It defused historic tensions and enabled France to express itself as a major political actor, using the combined strength of Europe as its base. This could be seen as an invention of some skill to remedy a double historic

problem – the German question on the one hand, and that of how to secure an enhanced status for a medium-ranked power on the other. Those politicians who pushed this vision deserve much credit.

But the solution has not come without a price; as European integration hardens (for the euro will bring all kinds of pressures for policy harmonization and increased pooling of decision-making), the question of identity raises itself. Ever greater cooperation is very acceptable, but it involves an erosion of real sovereignty, whatever anyone says: does this erosion reach a point at which France starts to lose its identity as a nation? Results from the European election of June 1999, in particular the strong showing of the sovereigntist list of Charles Pasqua and Philippe de Villiers, suggested that substantial numbers of the French feared that such a watershed may have been reached. Not everyone agrees with UDF leader François Bayrou that there is no real contradiction between a French identity and a European one; squaring the two off is a lot harder than academic commentators such as Gregory Flynn suggest.¹⁹ The French political class is faced with two countervailing pressures: increased pressures for political and economic integration on the one hand, while on the other clinging to French prerogatives in decision-making, precisely because these are fundamental to one's identity. Or are they? The UK is intimately familiar with this debate, so much so that we do everything to avoid it; there seems very little sign of creative invention here, rather a tendency to let things take their course, a 'policy drift'. Will France do any better? Some of the later chapters attempt to answer that question.

The question of identity is also at the heart of the domestic challenge which France faces. Simply put, this is: how to restore cohesion in a society which is increasingly subject to the fragmentary pressures described above? French policy-makers are constantly having to reintegrate various categories who are falling rapidly out of the social net. In economic terms, this means workers from obsolete industries which were the main motor for their regions; people with old skills, displaced by innovation; small businesses elbowed out by competition. In social terms, it means the underqualified and unskilled parts of the population, who are poorer, live in inadequate suburbs and are frequently of different cultures; many of them are female. The speed of change and innovation mean that there are constantly new members of these categories appearing. The market alone will not simply provide new outlets and possibilities for such marginalized people; it might provide some 'McJobs', but that is all. Yet millions of people cannot simply be

allowed to lapse into *anomie*, with a total loss of identity and a propensity to complete apathy or to angry protest (of which the *Front national* was one obvious beneficiary, notably in the first round of the 2002 presidential elections). Active and creative public policies are needed to restore a sense of community, and bring the marginalized in again; this is what the republican model promises after all. But public policy is not about heroic one-off actions to solve problems definitively (even in the country of Colbert, DATAR and the 35-hour week); it tends to be incremental and ad hoc, following problems as much as anticipating them. The task of reintegration is immense; as the economy grows ever more competitive, it is likely to produce more and more marginalization, requiring solidarity. Yet the official discourse has to be more and more about efficiency, competitiveness and the elimination of those who have become obsolete; they have to be 'helped back into the market'. This is a hard circle to square.

At the same time, the solutions to problems lie less and less within the remit of national governments anyway; European-level coordination is the only way forward, and that brings its own pitfalls. It is not our task here to second-guess the policy-makers of the twenty-first century, but simply to underline the difficulties which they face as they seek to invent solutions. Time alone will show just what policies France invents to address these ongoing questions, which of course are not peculiar to the hexagon.

Conclusion

What, then, can we learn about the France of today from looking at the France of 1900? Probably the lessons go beyond France; this chapter has managed thus far to avoid the fatal words 'the French exception', deliberately so, because the French experience of inventing political futures is probably much the same as anyone else's. What emerges above all is the sheer difficulty of inventing the political, of managing society in a rational forward-looking way with predictable, safe outcomes. The France of 1900 was in many ways a tighter-structured unit than today, with a clear and relatively simple structure of conflict, which the politicians were able to keep that way. But the measures which they took in both domestic politics and in relations with other states hardly suggest a polity in rational control of its destiny; actions were taken with the best of motives (there is none better than the desire to be re-elected), but their consequences proved uncontrollable and in the end damaging.

Social scientists have various concepts to describe this sort of situation where the opposite happens to what is supposed to happen; engineers speak less politely of Sod's law. Macmillan was heard to regret the disruptive power of 'events, dear boy, events'. But whatever the terminology used, Sod's law is always likely to be one of the consequences of political invention.

Today it is in some ways different. France is a much more uneven and dynamic society, and as such much more difficult to steer. But at the same time, political and social leaders now know more about social mechanisms and how to influence them through politics. One important piece of that knowledge must surely be that wholesale solutions are impossible to find and that any 'invention' of the future is necessarily piecemeal and incremental. Perhaps it is enough just to wish good fortune and a prudent approach to those who have to invent the policies for the twenty-first century? Undoubtedly the policy-makers who guide France into the future can draw sustenance from a panoply of theorists of social invention from Michel Crozier to Alain Touraine to Anthony Giddens; but perhaps they should also find room on their bookshelves for a prophet of caution like Joseph de Maistre.²⁰

Notes

1. P. Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* (London: Harvester, 1991).
2. J. Garrigues, *La République des hommes d'affaires* (Paris: Aubier, 1997); J. Grévy, *La République des opportunistes, 1870–85* (Paris: Perrin, 1998). Léon Gambetta (1838–82) emerged as the main republican leader in the 1870s; a brilliant orator, he was essential in persuading the peasants and petty-bourgeois of provincial France that a moderate republic could look after their interests as well as any other type of regime.
3. A. Siegfried, *Tableau politique de la France de l'Ouest sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Colin, 1913).
4. S. Hoffmann, 'Paradoxes of the French Political Community' in S. Hoffmann (ed.), *In Search of France* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 1–117.
5. For a defence of 'weak' parties see D. Hanley, *Party, Government and Society: Republican Democracy in France* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2002).
6. The Dreyfus case (1898–1906) was a watershed in French politics. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a career officer who was also a republican and a Jew, was sentenced to prison on bogus evidence for allegedly spying for Germany. Attempts to secure an acquittal polarized French political life for eight years. The left (socialists, Radicals and a majority of mainstream republicans) supported Dreyfus. The conservative right, increasingly influenced by nationalist and anti-Semitic currents, opposed a retrial; some republicans sided with this tendency. Moderate politicians, whether republican or Catholic/monarchist, tended to be pulled towards extremes. Politics thus

became strongly polarized on ideological left/right lines, whereas the previous tendency had been for social and economic moderates to coalesce increasingly in order to protect their interests against socialism and the lower classes; ideological differences were beginning to take second place to this class alignment, but the Dreyfus episode disrupted this development.

Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929): veteran Radical leader, famed for his fierce anti-clericalism and skill as a debater, *Le tigre*, as he was nicknamed, helped overthrow a number of governments before becoming a tough law-and-order premier (1906–1909) and later leading France to victory in 1918. He liked to refer to himself as ‘an old *jacobin*’ (firm believer in the virtues of the centralized republican state).

René Viviani (1863–1925): labour lawyer and politician who made skilful use of the space between Radicals and socialists. Staunchly anti-clerical, he was prime minister in 1914.

7. R. Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789–1914* (London: Routledge, 1989); M. Larkin, *Church and State in France after the Dreyfus Affair: the Separation Issue* (London: Macmillan, 1974).
8. The Radical Party was not simply an ideological party produced by the church/state cleavage but also a vehicle for the (mainly provincial) middle classes. Its class character became accentuated as it aged and as it achieved its ideological goals, particularly after World War I. see S. Berstein, ‘Le Parti radical-socialiste, de la défense du peuple à celle des classes moyennes’, in G. Lavau, G. Grunberg and N. Mayer (eds), *L’Univers politique des classes moyennes* (Paris: FNSP, 1983), pp. 71–93.
9. P. Birnbaum (ed.), *La France de l’Affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).
10. René Waldeck-Rousseau (1846–1904): business lawyer and centre-left politician. Legalized trade unions and headed a ‘government of republican defence’ (1899–1902) which shored up democracy against perceived threats from the right. He prepared legislation on religious orders which would lead to the eventual disestablishment of the Catholic Church in 1905.

Jules Ferry (1832–93): leading republican politician of 1880s. Strengthened the fledgling republic with reforms of administration, local government and above all education. Built up French Empire in Indo-China. Prime minister twice.

Paul Bert (1833–86): anti-clerical militant and Ferry’s main ally as education minister in introducing free, compulsory and non-denominational primary education in the 1880s. These measures weakened hugely the Catholic Church’s control over education.

11. D. Gaxie, *La Démocratie représentative*, 2nd edition (Paris: Monchrestien, 1996); M. Offerlé, *Les Partis politiques*, 3rd edition (Paris: PUF, 1987).
12. The *cartel* was the name given to alliances between socialists, Radicals and various left republicans usually concluded to fight parliamentary elections. The *cartel* won the 1924 and 1932 elections, but the resulting left-wing governments soon fell apart under the pressure of financial and international problems.

Edouard Herriot (1872–1957): leading Radical politician. Mayor of Lyon for over 50 years but best known as prime minister of three very weak *cartel* governments (1924–26 and 1932). Renowned for anti-clericalism at home and conciliatory stances in international relations.

The concordat was an agreement signed between the Pope and Napoleon I which restored to Catholicism the status of an official religion; the state paid salaries to the clergy in return for influence over decision-making within the church hierarchy. The Separation Act of 1905 ended this special relationship but could never be applied in the three very Catholic *départements* of Alsace which had been occupied by Germany until 1918 following her defeat of France in 1871.

13. H. Brunschvig, *Mythes et réalités de l'impérialisme colonial français, 1871–1914* (Paris: Colin, 1960); J. Ganiage, *L'Expansion coloniale de la France, sous la Troisième République, 1871–1914* (Paris: Payot, 1968).

Eugène Etienne, the deputy for Oran in Algeria, was the acknowledged leader of the influential, cross-party colonial lobby in pre-1914 parliaments; he was several times minister for the colonies.

14. Louis Barthou (1862–1934): mainstream republican politician specializing in foreign policy. Prime minister once.

Théophile Delcassé (1852–1923): left-republican, several times foreign minister. Devoted to strengthening France's alliance position against Germany.

15. Raymond Poincaré (1860–1934): mainstream republican, known for re-establishing financial confidence after the monetary crises of the 1920s and for his determined pursuit of reparations due from defeated Germany under the Versailles Treaty of 1919. Several times prime minister; President of the Republic, 1913–20.

16. This type of thinking is exemplified in the English-speaking world by Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998).

17. G. Grunberg and E. Schweisguth, 'Libéralisme culturel et libéralisme économique', in D. Boy and N. Mayer (eds), *L'Electeur français en questions* (Paris: FNSP, 1990); C. Imbert and J. Julliard, *La droite et la gauche: qu'est-ce qui les distingue encore?* (Paris: Lafont/Grasset, 1995).

18. G. Carcassonne, 'De la démocratie au parlement', *Pouvoirs*, 64, 1993, pp. 35–41.

19. François Bayrou was education minister in the right-wing governments in power after 1993; he typifies the strong enthusiasm for Europe shared by the Christian Democrat family, which was never strongly organized in France and which UDF and its major component Force Démocrate nowadays represent. On French identity and Europe see G. Flynn, *Remaking the Hexagon: the New France in the New Europe* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995).

20. Michel Crozier and Alain Touraine are social theorists who both celebrate the dynamic, creative nature of largely spontaneous initiatives and movements arising within civil society, as compared to the stultifying influence of the state, which continues to harbour unrealistic ambitions as to how far society can be transformed 'from above'.

Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821): political philosopher and politician. Authoritarian, reactionary and proud of it. In particular, he challenged the French Revolution as a doomed attempt to change the inevitable course of human history by rational intervention. His fiery rhetoric disguises some very shrewd observations about the obscurity of political processes in general.

2

Reinventing the French State

Jack Hayward

In France, if everything did not necessarily begin with the state, it used almost always to end with the state. It has become increasingly evident that there has been a loss of state autonomy both internationally and in the context of European integration. Less generally accepted has been the loss of control in internal affairs, to the extent that these can still meaningfully be differentiated from external affairs. France has been – with Britain – the state least willing to concede that its authority has been circumscribed, leading to a widening gap between generalized assertions of sovereignty and the prosaic reality of piecemeal concessions. France strives to preserve a central role for its state, like other major European states: ‘They retain a nodal decision-making position but their action is more indirect, more discreet and more bartered.’¹ In seeking to assess processes that are still working themselves out, it is necessary to go back beyond the recent past to more deep-seated characteristics of the French polity as a corrective to the errors induced by extrapolation from current trends, the besetting weakness of economic forecasting. Being incapable of anticipating the unforeseeable and on the assumption that past experience is a relatively reliable starting point in a dependent polity, we are faced with rival interpretations of that past.

The ambiguous cultural legacy

Three, not equally popular, characterizations of the French state offer themselves as benchmarks against which to consider what is being reinvented. The most popular of these is to regard France as a quintessentially strong state, with power concentrated at the centre, capable of giving orders to all and taking orders from none, in line with

Bodin's conception of sovereignty.² A more recent view is to regard France as a weak state, at the mercy of external pressures, organized interests and eruptions of popular protest, to which it gives way after half-hearted attempts at resistance and repression. Finally, there is a less simplistic view that in France 'state power or autonomy varies across sectors, and that there is no predetermined constellation of factors that renders a state either a prisoner of civil society or wholly independent of that society'.³ The French state can sometimes impose its will, whilst at other times it must conciliate, negotiate or surrender. It is the changing balance between these responses and their prospects of success that will be our concern when we consider the policy adaptations and institutional capacities with which France faces the future.

For an arresting portrayal of France as a strong state, who better to interrogate than the anarcho-socialist Proudhon writing from prison during the Second Republic with his customary Rabelaisian verve? Couched in general terms, his onslaught is inspired by French experience:

To be governed is to be kept under surveillance, inspected, spied upon, directed, regimented, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, sermonized, checked, numbered, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue to do so ... to be governed is to be at every action, at every transaction, noted, registered, inventoried, taxed, stamped, measured, enumerated, licensed, assessed, authorized, penalized, endorsed, admonished, obstructed, reformed, rebuked, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, manoeuvred, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, pressured, mystified, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hounded, manhandled, bludgeoned ...; and to crown all, cheated, ridiculed, outraged, dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.⁴

Those who are inclined to think that Proudhon was exaggerating should reflect on how many scandals – from telephone tapping via massive personal and partisan misappropriation to police brutality – and abuses of power can be fitted to his torrent of epithets on the way too many French people (not just immigrants) are treated daily by the agents of their 'Republican' state.

A more restrained portrayal of France as a weak state is provided by a Gaullist deputy, speaking in the National Assembly in December 1968, not long after the 'events of May' that year appeared to shake the Fifth Republic to its foundations. He lamented the French tendency to move from inertia to change only under the pressure of direct action, to which the authorities ignominiously surrendered:

Our citizens ... sometimes contribute to this awareness of the need for action by methods which should be condemned but whose effectiveness one cannot objectively deny. A few windows are broken in a prefecture or even a sub-prefecture; then a series of measures awaited for years, sometime vainly demanded in the National Assembly, suddenly begins to be implemented. The paving stones are dug up and a few cars are set on fire: the entire French educational system is totally reformed ... France thus progresses by reprimands that brutally bring it to its senses, at the cost of unrest which paralyses it and from which it emerges as from a dream.⁵

There are many more recent examples in which the laws have not been enforced against road transport lorry owners or farmers, as well as the privileges of this or that sectional interest. Many of those subjected to the consequences of the non-application of state authority might substitute 'nightmare' for dream at the end of the preceding quotation.

The equivocal, dualistic French attitude to state leadership has been admirably portrayed by the disenchanting liberal, Alexis de Tocqueville, writing in the Second Empire about the Old Regime but demonstrating the inadequacy of both the strong state and weak state characterizations of the French polity. Although expressed in the dated terms of national psychology, he is cautioning us against sweeping generalizations based upon formal structures or the assertive pretensions of those who exercise state power:

Undisciplined by temperament, the Frenchman is always readier to put up with the arbitrary rule, however harsh, of an autocrat than with free, well-ordered government by his fellow citizens, however worthy of respect they be. At one moment he is up in arms against authority and the next we find him serving the powers-that-be with zeal such as the most servile races never display. So long as no one thinks of resisting, you can lead him on a thread, but once a revolutionary movement is afoot, nothing can restrain him from taking part in it. That is why our rulers are so often taken by surprise; they

fear the nation either too much or not enough, for though it is never so free that the possibility of enslaving it is ruled out, its spirit can never be broken so completely as to prevent its shaking off the yoke of an oppressive government.⁶

The unwillingness to exercise state power when challenged by determined opposition is indicative that powers in principle all too often cannot be applied in practice.

One hundred and fifty years later, have the local, sectoral, national and international underpinnings of this variously interpreted French state culture been changing so drastically that would-be statesmen are compelled, albeit reluctantly, to essay either a partial or comprehensive attempt to adapt the French state to the impending requirements of the twenty-first century? To try to answer this question, we must first examine how the functions and purposes of the French state have been changing, before considering how it has begun adapting to reflect the shifting purposes whose fulfilment is its *raison d'être*.

The functions of the French state

At the cost of oversimplification, only three major activities of the French state are selected for a brief discussion, in order to place the task facing those seeking to reinvent it in context. These are the functions of national defence, economic protection and promotion, and the provision of public services and social security.

First, for most of French history, the state has been mobilized to prepare for war, wage war or recover from war. Until the Revolution, only small professional armies were involved but thereafter the male population was more or less selectively called up for military service. The end of the Cold War and the devaluation of the significance of the French nuclear deterrent have left France without a clear strategy. There has, out of practical necessity, been an increasing – firstly surreptitious and then open – rapprochement with NATO, while the European Common Foreign and Security Policy has posed the problem of how much integration is acceptable in terms of surrendering a shrinking capacity for independent action.⁷

President Chirac's momentous announcement of 28 May 1996 that France would abandon universal male conscription – which had increasingly become a fiction because of numerous exemptions – was preceded by a resumption of nuclear tests to assert a symbolic independence. The move to a professional *armée de métier* marks a break with

the 'nation in arms' tradition and the Greek idea that a citizen should bear arms for his political community, with implications far beyond the military sphere.

Second, the Colbertist tradition of an inward-looking, closed economy mentality, based upon state protection and promotion of national and imperial economic activity, is in rapid and disorderly retreat. Old statist rhetoric races to keep up with new market practices. In monetary and macroeconomic policy, the European Union (EU) has been increasingly intrusive, particularly since the pivotal 1983 U-turn by President Mitterrand, under external constraints mediated by political pressure from Finance Minister Jacques Delors and Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy. Compelled to choose between European integration and pursuing 'socialism in one country', Mitterrand reluctantly opted for the former. The adoption of the euro and the failure to secure a projection onto the EU level of a French idea of 'economic government' to control the European Central Bank are indicative of the shape of things to come. The attempt during the French presidency of the EU in the latter half of 2000 to secure greater influence of Finance Ministers over the European Central Bank was repelled as a threat to its independence.

Industrial and financial patriotism continue to exercise a powerful grip on the French imagination. French governments and public opinion have not yet abandoned the urge to create and preserve national champion firms. The substitution of privatization for nationalization prepared the way for the further move to European and international champions under EU and market pressures.⁸ Far from the Jospin government halting the privatization programmes of the Right, in the 1997–2002 period more public enterprises were sold off in whole or part – France Télécom, Thomson Multimedia and the Crédit Lyonnais being spectacular examples of the latter – with the deliberate aim of facilitating cross-national mergers. A series of hostile takeover battles in the banking and petroleum sectors in 1999–2000 provided other indicators of what was to occur on an ever greater scale: market predominance over state preference.⁹

Third, demographic change – France's ageing population is an ever decreasing share of world population – and the rising cost of the welfare state have forced French governments to reconsider what can be provided by way of health services, unemployment benefits, pensions and so forth. Pensions bring the problems of an ageing population and state welfare benefits into sharp focus, linked with the changing nature of French capitalism, as the much derided and envied

Anglo-American pension funds take over ownership of ever larger parts of undercapitalized French business. The popular decision by the Mauroy Government (1981–84) to reduce the pensionable age to 60 has come to haunt those worried about provision for the retired in the twenty-first century. In 1993, the government of Édouard Balladur raised the threshold for entitlement to full pension rights to forty years for private-sector workers, and in the late 1990s a series of reports argued that further restrictions would be necessary in order to sustain the pensions system into the twenty-first century. As a result of the continuing controversy, pensions reform became a major theme of the 2002 presidential election.¹⁰ The financial implications of acquired rights to social security is a major time bomb that needs to be defused if it is not to explode under the next generation. Reluctance to pay by taxation for generous provision may well mean that less will be publicly funded.

Policy adaptations to suit more limited objectives

How have the three functions adumbrated been reinterpreted to allow a more modest French state to retain the legitimacy that derives not just from traditional loyalties but from the ability to satisfy the demands made upon it? This involves trying to reduce public expectation to levels and objectives that the French state is capable of fulfilling.

First, there has been a shift, which can be expected to continue, from a Gaullist emphasis on national self-assertive independence and *grandeur* to a reluctant acceptance of piecemeal integration into the EU and NATO. Mitterrand sought to perpetuate the old style but his successor has been unable to keep up the pretence. The pseudo-Gaullist Chirac has been better able to jettison the overloaded baggage bequeathed to him, so that what was unthinkable has become, almost overnight, obvious. Furthermore, the post-imperial, neo-colonialist policies pursued in Africa – with their pronounced smell in some instances of petrol – have been de-emphasized in the wake of disastrous military interventions, such as that in Rwanda, in the mid-1990s. This has meant less financial support for Francophone African currencies and expeditions to rescue dictatorial regimes.

In the EU, France no longer leads but no other country has replaced it, which accounts in part for the fact that the EU is in the doldrums. In NATO, France tags along behind the US and its allies because it cannot afford not to do so. Clinging on to its permanent Security

Council seat, France tries to use the United Nations as a framework to keep some freedom of action but military interventions have increasingly tended to depend on US/NATO command structures and resources to be effective. France has been active in promoting humanitarian intervention in the cause of its human rights tradition, notably in Kosovo, provided it involves the infringement of the national sovereignty of others and does not threaten France's important commercial interests.

Second, the shift from public ownership and *dirigiste* control to reliance upon the regulation of private business has not proceeded in France as fast or as far as in the US or the UK. Nevertheless, the state's capacity to intervene directly in increasingly complex, rapidly changing and interdependent markets has meant that it has had to resort to more indirect and informal pressures. However, it is regulatory activity by the European Commission that is increasingly compelling the French state to engage in an unfamiliar kind of bargaining with Brussels that was not envisaged by the French Competition Council. As Majone has pertinently pointed out, 'the relative insulation of Community regulators from the short-run political considerations and pressures which tend to dominate national policy-making' also ensures that 'the Commission is less likely to be captured by a particular firm or industry than a national regulator'.¹¹ Having hardly proceeded far with the process of deregulation, the French state has had to engage in new style re-regulation, often at the behest of the Brussels-based Commission, particularly in its dealings with the erstwhile monopoly public enterprises which have to conform to the need to open up to foreign competition.

Within France, the legislation to establish a standard 35-hour working week was intended to be employment-creating, but has been converted by business-trade union negotiation into an emphasis on flexibility (see Kok Escalle, Chapter 9). Once the law had provided the impetus, the state handed over to the 'social partners', so that decentralized bargaining has displaced uniform legal compulsion as the instrument of change. Government is thus forced to take a back seat.

Third, the single currency criteria requiring the reduction of budgetary deficit and borrowing, without increasing taxation (which is regarded as politically suicidal), has exerted pressure to reduce public expenditure. This is eased but not eliminated when economic growth increases revenue yield. It means that an attack must be made upon the sacrosanct privileges of many groups, especially producers and

consumers of public services or recipients of state subsidies, which politicians are frightened to undertake.

While the 'peace dividend' has made a contribution in the shape of reduced military expenditure in the 1990s, the scope for further cuts is not so great. The need to reduce the escalating cost of social security – begun by Juppé in his 1996 reform and pursued by Martine Aubry, the Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity, after 1997 – will be a continuing problem for the French state. Refusal to face the painful financial implications of such reforms by condemnation of the current conventional wisdom has not yielded any practical alternative policies.

Institutional capacities to achieve these limited objectives

It is not just the French Communist Party (PCF) but the French political system as a whole that is falling behind, to an extent that is exceptional in western Europe. While the PCF, led by Robert Hue, is desperately attempting to overcome the electorally disastrous consequences of its failure to adapt in the past, how well equipped is the French state to undertake even the more modest tasks it needs to accomplish?

First, the rhetorical assertion of its character as a 'one and indivisible Republic' has in reality disintegrated into a multiplicity of self-centred state services in the hands of agents more concerned to defend their vested interests than to pursue the 'general interest'. The French state administration is compartmentalized and fragmented, both vertically and horizontally, into ministries, divisions and other introverted lower echelons. When combined with the effects of multi-level governance, (local, regional, national, EU and international) which have diffused power and rendered decisive action more complex and risky, the institutional capacity to bring about the necessary changes by strategic action rather than tactical reaction has been seriously weakened.

Frequent calls for improved coordination to deal with problems that are interdependent both in the public policies concerned and the actors that need to be persuaded to cooperate, merely emphasize how ineffective such injunctions have been. Resounding calls to assertions of will by the likes of former Interior Minister in the Jospin Government, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, remain simplistic and nostalgic rhetoric, themselves becoming part of the problem by exacerbating intra-governmental conflicts, rather than the solution they purport to be.

Second, when one adds to the plural character of the party support for both the government and the oppositions that necessitates coalition in a country where adversarial rather than consensus politics has predominated, the increasing frequency of 'cohabitation' at the political summit of state power, the institutional incapacity to act quickly and effectively is exacerbated. (The 1986–88 trial of strength between Mitterrand and Chirac was not as bitter as the subsequent cohabitations of 1993–95 and 1997–2002.)¹² The resulting confusion and uncertainty reopened the debate over whether France should choose between a presidential or parliamentary system of government. A more modest proposal of reducing the presidential term to coincide with that of the Assembly to reduce the frequency of cohabitation was forced on a reluctant Chirac, leading to a referendum to reform article 6 of the constitution in September 2000. However, the elections of 2002 revealed continued confusion over the relationship between the two branches of the executive: expectations that the reduction of the presidential mandate would lead to a more parliamentary style of government were confounded by the inversion of the electoral calendar, which reduced the legislative elections to a plebiscite for the newly (re-)elected president who had already nominated his provisional government.

Third, a much-touted reform is the reduction or even the elimination of the *cumul des mandats* (the practice of accumulating elected mandates at several levels of governance: local, departmental, regional, national, European). Critics dwell on the defects of this system without acknowledging that it was a functional response to a hyper-centralized state system.¹³ While excessive accumulation of office-holding is rightly being curtailed, eliminating it would break a vital link between centre and periphery, adding to the centrifugal fragmentation of the French politico-administrative process. The Thatcher onslaught of the 1980s demonstrated how poorly armed the once-proud British local authorities were to resist assertions of central power. Furthermore, restriction of the *cumul des mandats* practice weakened the Jospin government by causing the departure of important ministers such as Martine Aubry, who left in October 2000 to prepare for election as Mayor of Lille. In the event, Jospin was unable to move further to reduce multiple office-holding because of decisive resistance by the right-wing Senate, which is recruited from local authorities and has a strong vested interest in the perpetuation of *cumul*. But the idea that ministers need to concentrate on national affairs rather than represent local interests has become part of the mainstream, even if Jean-Pierre

Raffarin was selected as prime minister in 2002 precisely because of his credentials in regional rather than national politics.

Fourth, a century-old obstacle to reform, in France as in the UK, has notoriously been the unrepresentative Second Chamber. The Senate played a part in the 1969 downfall of de Gaulle when he attempted radically to weaken it by amalgamation with the Economic and Social Council.¹⁴ It has obstructed most modernizing legislation, the over-representation of rural France being reflected in its 1999–2000 resistance to shortening the hunting season under EU and environmentalist pressure. Reform of the Senate featured in the presidential campaign proposals in 2002, but even with the reduction of the senatorial term of office promised by the new Raffarin government, the conservative character of the institution is likely to remain largely intact, with a permanent majority of the more hidebound and reactionary right.

Conclusion: the prospects before the French state

The contemporary malaise shared by French elite and mass opinion is not simply the result of a persistently high rate of unemployment or the proliferation of scandals leading to the indictment and even incarceration of many prominent politicians. The causes of both of these phenomena can be dealt with, but the slow-motion crisis of the French state is even more deep-seated and intractable. A 'reinvention of the French state' poses problems of an ideological, policy and institutional character, which are more readily stated than resolved.

First, ideologically, France needs at last to accept the implications of political, juridical and economic liberalism, for so long an object of distaste and derision.¹⁵ It should rejoin the bulk of the liberal democracies, not just the 'Anglo-Saxon' ones. This requires a fundamental reassessment of its Gallican and Jacobin authoritarianism, not sheltering behind invocations of the 'Republic' which has been much less friendly to individual rights in practice than in principle.

Second, in economic and social policy, France should fully accept the need to rely on market coordination without coordinators. Although this will off-load recourse to direct intervention that government has proved decreasingly capable of fulfilling, it will not dispense it from establishing or reinforcing as effective a supervisory system of public regulation as can be enforced. Not *laissez-faire* but *faire faire* is what is required. Lionel Jospin set the cat amongst the socialist pigeons when he declared on television, on 13 September 1999: 'It is not by

law, through legal texts, that the economy can be regulated' – a phrase that prompted cries of outrage at what was regarded as a confession of defeatism, and is hard to reconcile with the legislative reduction of working hours. Yet market freedom needs to be regulated by independent authorities to protect the weak from abuse of power by the strong. Enemies of the 'social liberalist' policy mix (which needs to be more social in Britain and more liberal in France) should bear in mind the words of one of its lucid early twentieth-century advocates. In his 1911 exposition of *Liberalism*, L.T. Hobhouse referred to 'the manifest teaching of experience that liberty without equality is a name of noble sound and squalid result'.¹⁶ He reminded his readers that 'freedom is only one side of social life. Mutual aid is not less important than mutual forbearance, the theory of collective action no less fundamental than the theory of personal freedom.'¹⁷ Solidarity does not need to be abandoned in social policy when the market is relied upon in economic policy. Both are integral parts of an authentic social liberal programme.

Third, institutionally, France should accept the need for a complex pluralistic and cosmopolitan sharing of power between interdependent authorities. Only in this way will political effectiveness be attainable and political accountability be achievable at both national and EU levels. While French governments have been divesting themselves of direct controls that they are no longer able or willing to exercise, they have exposed themselves to penetration by the more unsavoury features of private profit-seeking, both transnational and domestic, that defy attempts at regulatory prevention and repression. Unaccustomed to what they regard as 'Anglo-Saxon' recourse to independent regulatory agencies as a corrective to market forces when democratic accountability has proved to be ineffective and judicial-cum-journalistic exposure is belated and patchy, the political class has become discredited by major and minor scandals. As I argued in an earlier study of state-business relations in France:

The twilight of French industrial patriotism is exposing to public view the consequences of a general decline in the standards of public morality which a separation between firms and state should prevent. Market morality, in which money is the measure of all things, is not a new phenomenon, but its hegemony is no longer curbed by stringent countervailing public guardians who have adopted the values of the managers of private firms, even though they continue to come from the same state-school-made élites.¹⁸

Many advocates of a self-assertive France will regard these invitations to a resolute modesty on the part of the state as distasteful and demeaning, repellent and repugnant. For deep-seated cultural and structural reasons, France is unwilling to embrace the liberal capitalist dynamic. She can choose either to retreat in disorder or modify her state structures and adapt her state culture. She has already begun to do so, in deeds if not in words. The consumer and the shareholder are acquiring a place alongside the producer and the bureaucrat, political parties and organized interests, in shaping public economic policy. The citizen and the statesman should also have their say in public policy generally.

If France turns a deaf ear to the liberal summons, she will be compelled against her will – with some kicking and screaming – to accept the prerequisites of the twenty-first century state. It would be unfortunate if a momentous failure of political statesmanship were to lead to such a humiliating conclusion. ‘Stop the world, I want to get off’ is not a realistic option. Having over the centuries invented and reinvented the state as an artefact, demonstrating the capacity to anticipate and move with the times, France’s leaders must once again show that they can deploy the skills of statecraft in a rapidly changing context.

Notes

1. W. Müller and V. Wright, ‘Reshaping the State in Western Europe: the Limits to Retreat’, *West European Politics*, 17/3, (July 1994), 8.
2. See the translation of J. Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth* [1576], (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), especially Book VI, Chapter 4, p. 197 and Book II, Chapter 1, p. 52.
3. E. Suleiman, *Private Power and Centralization in France. The Notaires and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 303.
4. P.J. Proudhon, *Idée générale de la Révolution au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Garnier, 1851), epilogue.
5. *Journal Officiel. Assemblée Nationale. Débats*, 12 December 1968, p. 5409.
6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Régime and the French Revolution* [1856] (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955), pp. 210–11.
7. A. Menon, *The Ambivalent Ally: France, NATO and the Limits of Independence, 1981–97* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press – now Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), Chapter 7 and Conclusion.
8. J. Hayward (ed.), *Industrial Enterprise and European Integration. From National to International Champions in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), especially Chapter 1 by E. Cohen, ‘France: International Champions in Search of a Mission’. See also Cohen’s *La tentation hexagonale. La souveraineté à l’épreuve de la mondialisation* (Paris: Fayard, 1996). On an earlier stage in the transition, see J. Hayward, *The State and the Market Economy. Industrial Patriotism and Economic Intervention in France* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1986).

9. On 10 March 1999 the Banque Nationale de Paris (BNP) launched a hostile takeover bid for Société Générale (SG) and Paribas, which had agreed in February 1999 to merge. In the event, BNP succeeded in taking over Paribas but failed to gain control of SG. On 5 July 1999 Totalfina launched a hostile bid for ELF and succeeded in doing so. Despite claims that they would be left to the market, the finance minister was indirectly involved in both bids. Dominique Strauss-Kahn failed to secure the merger of the three banks, despite supporting the Governor of the Bank of France's attempt to achieve agreement. His support for the oil merger was effective. Strauss-Kahn subsequently resigned for unrelated reasons.
10. The employers' organization Medef (Mouvement des Entreprises de France) was particularly vociferous in pushing for a lengthening of the contribution period. Further pressure came from the European Union, which at the Barcelona summit in March 2002 recommended raising the retirement age in all member states. Journalists in *Le Monde* (5 April and 6 April 2002) observed that both of the two main presidential candidates (Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin) had taken part in the EU summit and thus at least implicitly committed themselves to acting on the recommendations.
11. G. Majone, 'The Rise of the Regulatory State in Europe', *West European Politics*, 17/3, (July 1994), 94.
12. See *Le Monde*, 16 July 2001.
13. For the best argued critique of *cumul*, see Yves Mény, *La Corruption de la République* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), Ch. 2.
14. See J. Hayward, 'Presidential Suicide by Plebiscite: de Gaulle's Exit, April 1969', *Parliamentary Affairs*, XXII/4, Autumn 1969.
15. See Chapter 12, 'Liberalism, There is the Enemy. On some Peculiarities of French Political Thought', in Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect. French Intellectuals 1944–1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
16. L.T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* (London: Home University Library, 1911), p. 86. He argues that 'the struggle for liberty is also, when pushed through, a struggle for equality' (p. 32).
17. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
18. J. Hayward, 'Changing Partnerships: Firms and the French State', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 5/2, (May 1997), 163–4.

3

The French State and the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

Pierre Sadran

Despite the way in which it is often portrayed by the French, the state has never been the eternal and universal figure embodied in the famous republican synthesis. Historians and political scientists have shown that the state is continually changing. It cannot therefore remain unaffected by the changes ushered in by the new century. In order to examine the way in which the French state is facing up to the challenges of the twenty-first century, we must first look at two crucial – and difficult – issues of definition.

First, what is the state in general, and the French state in particular? Speculation about the future development of the French state throws into question the traditional image of the state as a monolithic, pyramidal and centralized edifice. This is still effectively symbolized by the *statut général* covering several million French civil servants, or by the ‘all-powerful state’ of the *grandes écoles* (exclusive and selective higher education institutes) and *grands corps* (elite public sector professional bodies), which supply French society with its leaders.

Reality is naturally more complex. The French state is plural, multiple and fragmented. It is a conglomerate of diverse activities and specialized bodies managing public interests. Of course, the whole is neither indecipherable nor chaotic, and it complies with certain principles of classification. It is nevertheless important, following Pierre Rosanvallon, to disaggregate the functions of the state which have accumulated over the years: the ‘monarchic’ state or the state as a sovereign power which ensures order, justice, defence and security; the state as creator of society, that produces collective identity and organizes the nation; the welfare state that protects its citizens, redistributes wealth and socializes risks and responsibilities; and the Keynesian entrepreneurial state that intervenes as a manager of the economy.¹ Today, these representations

of the state have become disjointed in the public's perception, especially among young people: across the political divide, there is strong support for the regalian state, whilst the entrepreneurial state is rejected, to differing degrees according to ideological tendencies.² As this is accompanied by an enthusiasm for European integration, it is clear that our object of study – the French Republic – is not as easily identifiable, and not as frozen in a tried and tested model, as one might have thought.

Second, what are the future challenges facing the state? As the past has revealed, it is impossible to anticipate the events of a whole century. Moreover, with the exponential development of scientific knowledge and new technologies, the pace of history is accelerating. Some long-term predictions cannot be ignored, particularly when they are put forward by inventive, and sometimes provocative, minds. For example, Francis Fukuyama's prediction of the end of History (which has admittedly been revisited and corrected) contends that the development of biotechnologies, carried forward by the unstoppable globalization of the market economy, is leading to 'post-humanity'.³ Jacques Attali offers his vision of a nomadic society in which over-informed individuals navigate by connecting to multiple and various networks, driven by their needs or desires.⁴ These visions carry the seed of the gradual extinction of the nation-state, a political form whose capacity to assert its sovereignty over a territory and a population depends largely on a relative coincidence of frontiers and identity (cultural, religious, linguistic). In these terms, the Jacobin or Gaullian vision of the French state is already dead.

However, these dazzling prophecies, attractive though they may appear, are unsatisfactory, mainly because they are synthetic and ultimately determinist visions, whereas increasing complexity should lead us to analytical caution. Empirical analysis reveals interdependent factors that have a bearing on the future of the state, from within or without. First, there is the internationalization of the market economy, or what the novelist Michel Houellebecq has called 'the extension of the arena of struggle',⁵ a phenomenon which might not be unstoppable or totally new, but which is generally accepted as fact.

Second, European integration increasingly acts as a 'constraint' on national decision-making. The 'locking-in' effects of European integration on national legal systems (or 'engrenage') are considerable, although not well known by the public due to the gap between decision-making and political representation and debate. They are neatly summarized by Cohen-Tanugi: 'While economic actors are taking their place within a legal framework which considers them to be

the equals of states as far as the production of norms as well as submission to the law are concerned, states are considered by the European legal system to be economic actors.¹⁶

Third, the growth of complexity, along with the development of a 'modernity' based on a dual process of individualization and interdependence, means that the hierarchical and centralized system of management typical of the Jacobin state is fatally discredited. Only decentralized cooperation between individuals and groups – eventually on a transnational level – appears to provide a way of responding to the complexity of modern problems.

Last, politics is in crisis. The manifestations of this are as numerous as they are worrying for the functioning of democracy: a lack of interest in real issues (the decline of 'political concern' of which American elections are a clear illustration), an increase in abstentionism, lack of trust in politicians, and, perhaps most importantly, a decline in political identification as seen in the volatility of the electorate and the rise of anti-system forces.

The dynamic combination of these various factors strengthens the plausibility of the idea of the minimal 'night watchman' state. However, this scenario betrays excessive Western ethnocentrism, as it ignores the fact that, all over the world, millions of people are victims of a lack of state (as shown in Turkey, for example, in the aftermath of the earthquake, or in Colombia, ravaged internally by drugs trafficking and civil war). In the northern hemisphere, meanwhile, the march towards a minimalist state is neither inevitable nor irreversible. In the United States, Nye argues,

would a strong and prolonged economic downturn lead to demands for government response that would alter marketization and globalization? Would 'grand terrorism' or the equivalent of a domestic Pearl Harbor lead to a demand for intrusive government, even at the cost of civil liberties? Would the increasing power of states such as China, India or a revived Russia – particularly if accompanied by an expansionist ideology – transform the international system so that the defense functions of government would return to the Cold War model? Could ecological trends such as global warming become so clear and alarming that the public would demand much stronger governmental action?¹⁷

Nye's comments have a particular resonance after the events of 11 September 2001.

Furthermore, the thesis of the linear and inevitable decline of the state underestimates its characteristic complexity (the various representations previously mentioned) and its capacity to react. Multi-level public action, with a plurality of actors, is increasingly replacing the view of the state as a monolith. State regulation can reappear in unexpected places, and can even be strengthened in response to market abuse. Wright and Cassese have given the example of the City, which was previously an 'independent gentlemen's club', but progressively came under the control of the state after the 'Big Bang' of the mid-1980s.⁸ Moreover, the 'constraint' thesis is contested by many commentators who argue that European construction facilitates rather than thwarts the development of the state's regulatory function (see David Howarth, Chapter 5). One of the elements distinguishing the European Union from a federal state is that the expansion of its regulatory function does not occur at the expense of its member states; rather, the coordination of public action seems to reinforce the capacity for action of the public powers. According to Wright and Cassese, 'what we are witnessing is not a withdrawal, but a re-structuring of the state, a process which is a permanent feature of European history, ever since the modern form of the state appeared'.⁹

The French case differs only marginally from this model, if at all. Nevertheless, the particular power of the French state is not an illusion, but a reality, based on several elements which may be seen as specific to France. First, it has deep historic roots, because the state preceded the nation and built it on central pillars, such as the meritocratic production of elites. This system of elite reproduction has proved largely effective and provided legitimacy and flexibility (shown in the ease with which it adapted to the invention of the Republic), despite current criticisms.

Second, the state apparatus – that is, public administration – has assumed a political role, in the strict sense of the term, in key strategic circumstances. This is what Rosanvallon calls the state as creator of society.¹⁰ Certain crucial choices, presented to the public as being made by political leaders and parties, were in fact conceived, brought forward and implemented by a section of the administration. The secularization of society and the republican form of government were the work of schoolteachers – the standard-bearers of the Third Republic. Post-war reconstruction and industrialization were led by the planning community, made up of people such as Jean Monnet, Pierre Guillaumat, Simon Nora and François Bloch-Lainé, who acted as a 'collective intellectual', in Schonfeld's words.¹¹ Their successors continued

the drive for technological modernization, as well as membership of the European trade zone and the competition that went with it.¹² It was senior civil servants in the Treasury, notably Jean-Claude Trichet, who championed the introduction of the euro and independent powers for monetary institutions, in a country which has never liked monetary rigour and whose political leaders are said to be lacking in microeconomic culture.

Last but not least, none of these changes was carried out in the brutal or technocratic manner which is often – wrongly – attributed to the Jacobin state. France is a country where everything—including the most rationally founded decisions – is negotiated through elected representatives. How else could we explain the length of time needed to close a deserted post office or a maternity ward located twenty kilometres from a hospital offering better care? Even at the peak of the rationalizing voluntarism of the Gaullian period, all attempts to reduce the excessive number of small communes (32,000 have fewer than 2000 inhabitants) failed miserably. A French invention, the *cumul des mandats* (the holding of several elected mandates concurrently) is a key factor in adapting to centralism, and ‘taming Jacobinism’, to use Pierre Grémion’s expression.¹³ The *cumul des mandats* is a paradoxically modern concept in a society of multi-level governance managing complexity. To take but one example, in the negotiations on Corsica, the fact that José Rossi was simultaneously President of the Corsican Assembly and president of an opposition parliamentary group in the National Assembly played a part in the conclusion of the agreement which formed the basis of the bill subsequently presented by Lionel Jospin, as part of the so-called ‘Matignon process’.

This singular dialogue between the administrative apparatus and the system of national representation undoubtedly forms part of ‘French exceptionalism’. But this expression is problematic. France is an exception, but the same could be said of Russia, Israel, China, or even Scotland or Wales ... The essence of the French exception probably lies in the place occupied by the representation of this exception in today’s collective subconscious. What is exceptional is, above all, a belief in the existence of French exceptionalism, which represents attachment to a mixture of institutional and social specificities and a discourse of universalism. Belief in French exceptionalism stands at the centre of current political and media debate and forms the most meaningful dividing line in political life, outside election periods when coalitions of interests based on the left/right opposition re-emerge.

The 'sovereignists' are, in fact, those who see the history of the contemporary world as the struggle between globalization and national exceptions: Jean-Claude Chevènement and Charles Pasqua appear to belong to the same side, despite their ideological differences. Although their opponents denounce them as backward-looking, they could also be seen as the champions of political voluntarism against the alleged inevitability of mimetic modernization.

However, contrary to Astérix's village of implacable Gauls, the French have become less receptive to the myth of exceptionalism (myth, in both the sense of a symbolic history of origins and of an amalgam of mobilizing images). First, because the nation-state has been destabilized from above and below: by the dynamic of decentralization and that of European integration. Second, because French universalism has had to lower its ambitions and be content to embody one particular version of the universal ideal. France can no longer lay claim to world leadership: Minitel had to give way to the Internet. Finally, because the French model of social integration, based on the republican school, does not work in the same way as in the past (see Michèle Tribalat, Chapter 8). Distinctive cultures have become legitimate in a France which showed in the World Cup of 1998 that it felt more at home with a *Black-Blanc-Beur* team (Blacks-Whites-French of North African descent) than with the blue, white and red of the national flag.

Change and resistance

One way or another, reluctantly or due to its leaders' political will, the French state is changing rapidly and profoundly, despite what the received wisdom may say. A good illustration of this change – not necessarily for the better – is the fate of the prefect, a symbol of the Napoleonic state: 'I want the French people to date their happiness from the introduction of Prefects', declared Napoleon. In early 1998, prefect Claude Erignac was murdered, and it took several years to bring the killers to justice; the presumed ringleader remained at large on the island until 2003. Eighteen months later, a less tragic, but even more incredible, episode in the Corsican saga occurred, when prefect Bernard Bonnet and his office manager were investigated and imprisoned for ordering the police to burn down a *paillotte* (a wood and straw cabin serving drinks) that had been illegally built on a public beach. The authority of the state cannot escape unscathed from such shocks.

Changes in the state's relationship with the markets also become evident in the 1990s, as in the case of the planned merger between BNP and Paribas-Société Générale in 1999. Three senior civil servants, each representative of the way access to top management in large companies passes through state channels, presented rival projects for the creation of a banking group capable of competing with international giants, in other words national champions. All this happened under the watchful eye of the banking authorities, which themselves reflect the culture of state intervention. In the 1960s, General de Gaulle would have handed the affair to one of his close advisers, in keeping with the idea that French policy should not be dictated by the stock exchange, especially as, at the time, two of these banks (now privatized) were public companies. In 1999, though, everything was resolved by the financial markets, or rather nothing was resolved, since the markets gave no clear response, and the *Comité des établissements de crédit* had to intervene.¹⁴ The most remarkable aspect of this affair was the way in which the government wished to appear to let the market decide without imposing, or even suggesting, its own preference (whereas it obviously had one, just as any other government would have done). Equally significant was the way the left-wing press, such as *Le Monde*, advocated so-called 'shareholder democracy' and the transparency of the financial markets. It was left to republican sovereigntists such as Chevènement (then a government minister) to voice their indignation at the state's abdication: 'The fact that a committee of unaccountable bankers, independent from any democratic authority, took this decision says much about the decline of the state. If the state is not capable of reasserting its role, it means that there is no authority left to defend national interests.'¹⁵

Other major decisions show that the state, through its representatives, is questioning its own role and abandoning some of its traditional habits. This can be seen, for example, in a decision taken by Claude Allègre when he was education and research minister, a post eminently symbolic of the republican ideal.¹⁶ Allègre secured government agreement for a third-generation synchrotron to be built in Britain in collaboration with the British government and the Wellcome Trust (a charitable organization funded by the private sector pharmaceutical group Glaxo Wellcome), at the cost of 1.4 billion francs. This went against the advice of the French scientific community and socialist-led regional councils who said they were ready to invest heavily in the project in order to keep it in France.¹⁷ Two logics, both representing a

decisive shift from the left-wing statist tradition, were at work here: a financial logic of cost control and a scientific logic of international collaboration in research.

But it is undoubtedly the recognition of special status for Corsica and some overseas departments which marked a profound change in the nature of the Republic. While it remains indivisible, the Republic is no longer 'one', but decidedly 'plural'. The 'Territorial Laws' for New Caledonia and French Polynesia, and above all, the granting of legislative powers to the Corsican Assembly both constitute fundamental changes which will have long-term repercussions. Many republicans from different backgrounds expressed grave doubts about the changes, which led to Chevènement's resignation from the interior ministry.

No process of change runs smoothly. Traditional reflexes are still important at times of crisis. After the storms of December 1999, for example, timber-growers' associations were swift to abandon their neoliberal beliefs and demand government compensation for the damage caused, and in 2001 demands from northern departments for flood compensation assailed the Jospin government. More importantly, some strategic institutions actively resist change. For a long time, this was the case of the *Conseil d'état*, which struggled hard – albeit unsuccessfully – to refuse recognition of the supremacy of international and European law over French law. Today, the main obstacle is the Constitutional Council, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the laws of the Republic, which are no longer only 'national' laws, respect certain fundamental principles of the national constitution. Hence, it decided in June 1999 that the full ratification of the European charter on regional and minority languages would require a revision of the French constitution. Similarly, in 1991, it had rejected the legalization of the notion of the 'Corsican people', judging that a Corsican charter that conferred specific rights to groups, not only in their private life, but also in public life, was in contradiction with the constitutional principles of the 'indivisibility of the Republic, equality before the Law, and the unity of the French people'. The Council's decision provoked a strong reaction from journalists who denounced its 'deep fear of a France sullied by differences ... In this age of mobility, our supreme jurisdiction stands immobile behind the banner of archaic Jacobin, centralizing, uniform, and papist national republicanism.'¹⁸ Despite the vehemence of such protests, the Council stands firm.

The leopard and the camel

Whilst the path is clearly not without obstacles, the course has been set. A strategy of change has been chosen which involves the decline of French exceptionalism, not in the sense of the abandonment of a distinctive national identity, but in the ideological and mythical sense. However, the programme for change is not loudly advertised, as it would be likely to antagonize public opinion unnecessarily. This is why it is not easy to interpret the current process. Two complementary interpretations may be suggested.

The first interpretation is loosely inspired by Guiseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's famous novel *The Leopard*, which rests on the idea that it is necessary to accept change 'so that nothing changes'.¹⁹ Some observers see the ambiguous attitude of Treasury senior civil servants in the banks merger incident (outlined above) as an illustration of such an approach. After building their influence upon the adoption of financial and monetary rigour and the acceptance of the basic principles of globalization and modernization, they tried to retain what was left of their power – in vain, as the outcome revealed – through interventions which provoked the disapproval of the City and biting attacks from professors of management at the London School of Economics.²⁰

The leopard metaphor also illustrates the attitude of the *Cour des Comptes* (National Audit Office), which recently changed its doctrine. From now on, it will communicate to the European auditors in Luxembourg all reports concerning the fraudulent use of European funds of which it has knowledge. France is therefore the first country in Europe to end the 'black-out' of irregularities that European institutions are less and less prepared to tolerate. In the more general context of reform of the Treasury, Pierre Joxe, the President of the *Cour*, who is well known for his strong socialist and republican convictions, pushed for this change on his own initiative. But as journalist Rafaële Rivais observes:

With this sacrifice, Joxe proves to the European authorities the quality of French control and makes a case for its independence. Neither its work schedule nor its methods should be imposed on the *Cour* from the outside. As it can no longer be suspected of sacrificing its duty of control to its country's interests, it must remain free to disclose its reports as it pleases. The strategy chosen by the President tends to show that a transfer of responsibilities is not justified, as the principle of subsidiarity is, in the end, properly applied.²¹

The second interpretation exists alongside the first rather than being in direct opposition to it. However, it is of a wider importance because it expressed the position of the left-wing governmental majority in 1997–2002, and underlined the rallying of the French socialists to the market economy. Although the socialists were sincere in their embrace of the market economy, they could not admit it fully, as is highlighted by Lionel Jospin's expression: 'Yes to a free market economy, no to a free market society' – an unorthodox expression for a system of thought traditionally based on the dialectic relationship that unites the economy and social relations. In addition, the socialists abandoned, again as discreetly as possible, the integral and ideological form of French exceptionalism. This can be perceived through the following two statements, which are very different in their essence. The first, by François Mitterrand in 1981, reads as follows: 'I propose to the French people that with me they be the inventors of a culture, an art of living, in other words, a French model of civilization.'²² The second, by Lionel Jospin in 1999, reads:

Generally speaking, I believe that France needs to assert itself more on the international scene. Not because of its power, or the lessons that it could give, but because it sees a certain number of international realities in a different light. Although a friend of the United States, it does not systematically share the views of that great nation. Furthermore, France expresses itself as a deeply European country, enabling it to reconcile national interest and European ambition ... The world needs a France that is not like everyone else, that does not follow one unique way of thinking in the international community.²³

In fact, what Prime Minister Jospin was proposing to the French left was real change which he needed, for political reasons linked to cohabitation, to make anodyne or even comfortable, for fear of compromising his chances in the 2002 presidential election. Just as a camel carries reserves of water to sustain it in its journey across the desert, Jospin needed to build up a fund of goodwill (by improving the performance of French society and implementing the reforms for which he will need to be able to claim credit during the election campaign), without using up his capital of popularity with the left or exhausting his energy and that of his allies in internal quarrels.

In order to carry off this difficult challenge, Lionel Jospin had at his disposal two assets which in office he used to good effect: a

methodology of reform which incorporated a learning process, and the rhetoric of the 'plural left'. The learning process drew on the lessons of past failures, whilst moving away from the immobilism of a pedagogical approach on the one hand and the brutality of a 'clean sweep' on the other. However, the danger of the pedagogical approach, illustrated by Michel Rocard's attempts to transform the public services (particularly the 1989 Rocard memorandum), is that it remains largely inoperative and the symbolic aspects are quickly diverted from the initial objective. A further, political danger is that any political achievements remain hidden and it becomes very difficult for an outgoing prime minister to present his record in office for public approval, as Jospin learnt disastrously in 2002. However, the 'clean sweep' approach favoured by Margaret Thatcher is also destined to fail in France, due to the violent reactions of a society that does not accept the imposition of sudden, imposed change. Alain Juppé learned this to his cost in 1995, when he sparked off a protest movement which remained popular despite the inconvenience it caused to the public. Between homeopathic ineffectiveness and surgical trauma, acupuncture represents a middle road. This consists of treating strategic areas and relies on a multiplier effect whilst using the powerful anaesthetic of external (especially European) constraints.

With the concept, or rather the formula – in the senses of both a chemical compound and a set linguistic phrase – of the 'plural left', Lionel Jospin had a remarkable semantic tool to integrate, justify and control the occasionally very strong disagreements within his majority. Used skilfully, this rhetoric highlights differences while managing contradictions, allowing minority members of the coalition to change their position without losing credit among their own supporters. As Julien Mivielle, the author of one of the first studies on the subject, commented: 'By masking real power struggles with rhetoric, the term "plural left" allows these struggles to continue (in other words, ensures the hegemony of the Socialist Party) in a manner acceptable to all (that is, no-one loses face).'²⁴ The strategy worked well for a while. Although it was incapable of resolving the conflict between Jospin and Chevènement over Corsica (rhetoric has its limits), it nevertheless allowed the 'republican strand' and the *Mouvement des Citoyens* to remain part of the governmental majority, including in the European Parliament elections of 1999 when they might have been expected to break ranks. However, coalition management is a difficult strategy in the longer term, and by 2001 it had run out of steam, as the results of the municipal elections showed in that year. It is far from clear that the

presidential majority constructed in 2002 around a very reactive project is capable of using the same logic of consensus-building.²⁵

Management and politics

In these conditions, it is hard to envisage the state being able to adapt continually to the demands of modernity unless its leaders resolve two fundamental problems. The first is a problem of management: the reform of public administration in order to bring it into line with the needs of civil society. The second is the political problem of constructing a new social contract based on a *projet de société*, or collective vision of society, which responds to socio-demographic change.

The reform of the administrative apparatus and modes of public action has been preoccupying governments over the last fifteen years. The 1989 Rocard Memorandum on the renewal of public services was followed by the Picq Report for the Balladur government, the 1995 Juppé Memorandum, and then Zuccarelli's plans for local government. The minister for public services and reform of the state in 2000–2002, Michel Sapin, concentrated on the modernization of budgeting rules (switching from a resource-based to a performance-based approach), workforce planning and updating of technology. These efforts have not been in vain since, beyond simple changes of terminology and minor changes of practice, a new way of working has emerged, generating a learning process that those sections of the administration most receptive to change have been able to exploit to improve their efficiency (such as the public works department or the external economic relations department in the finance ministry). However, it is clear that some Gordian knots relating to structures, employment relations or vested interests, have yet to be cut, and these are preventing a qualitative leap of the type seen in the area of decentralization following the Deferre Laws. The constraints of co-management with trade unions in a neo-corporatist framework and the politically suicidal nature of attempts at rationalist voluntarism were clearly demonstrated by the forced resignation of the education and finance ministers, Claude Allègre and Christian Sautter, in spring 2000. The failure of their attempts at reform – whatever one may think of their different styles and the validity of their proposals – once again challenged the very idea of the reform of the state. The result is that the gap which already exists between the public and private spheres in France continues to grow, and the accusations the two camps throw at each other become ever more bitter, thereby rendering progress in this sensitive

area increasingly unlikely. One of the main challenges facing the state concerns the urgent need to improve relations with society. Given the current impasse, salvation can only come through a rehabilitation of politics.

Restoring politics to its pre-eminent place in an environment where economics and social questions are increasingly autonomous is not only one of the confused aspirations of the French, as regularly expressed in protest movements which paradoxically remain popular despite the considerable inconvenience they cause for citizens. It is also a necessity for any community that wishes to control its future. After all, although the modern large business corporation is decentralized, its general management retains control of essential activities such as the establishment of procedures to ensure the proper functioning of the network, the allocation of capital to the various units, and the promotion of a company identity. However, the rehabilitation of politics and the reinvention of political democracy can only occur around a project which is strong enough to mobilize people. Is this project not obvious, considering that France has for some years now chosen unambiguously to tie its future to Europe?²⁶ Opinion surveys show that an increasing number of citizens, especially young people, have adopted the idea. It is thus necessary to substitute a sort of 'European exception' for the French exception. That is to say, it is necessary to construct a new collective identity at a different level, through the invention of a political form which is not the classic nation-state, but which allows local identities to survive and which at last gives a political content to the construction of Europe. This is of course easier said than done. The French project of a 'federation of nation-states' which was presented to the Nice summit in December 2001 failed to secure a convincing response either from the domestic public or from other national governments.

One of the obstacles to formulating a coherent European project has been political cohabitation, which before its rejection by the electorate in 2002 had come to be seen as a quasi-structural element of the French constitutional framework. Under cohabitation, the 'rival associates' are tempted to exploit the schizophrenia of the citizens regarding the state for purely electoral reasons. 'The French – and one can only believe it is the same ones, given the size of the shifts measured by opinion polls – were happy during the storms in January 1999 to have a state and public services capable of coping with such natural disasters; they now most warmly support a movement against taxes.'²⁷ Yet nothing would be more damaging to the rehabilitation of politics than government by opinion poll and electoral populism. One of the

necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for preventing the drift to populism is the elimination of cohabitation. The adoption of the five-year presidential mandate and the outcome of the 2002 elections may therefore provide part of the solution.

Finally, the construction of a new European project for France also implies the exorcism of certain French passions, particularly an excessive taste for conflict about abstract constructs, which rules out political compromise and persuasion in favour of the elimination of rival views.²⁸

Conclusion

Is it possible to reach any conclusion on such an issue? Not if one considers that what remains to be invented is the means of transition from a relatively simple game, where the state was the main, if not the only actor, to a radically different game, in which the state is merely one piece of a larger – and, as yet, fragmented and incoherent – whole. This implies nothing less, in fact, than the invention of a European constitution. The answer is more positive if, on the other hand, one accepts that the political construction of Europe is not only the main challenge facing the state, but also the best and possibly only chance of harnessing the contradictions that could be the driving force of controlled rather than imposed change.

Notes

1. See P. Rosanvallon, *L'Etat en France de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1990); R. Lenoir and J. Lesourne (eds), *Où va l'Etat?* (Paris: Le Monde Editions, 1992).
2. Research by questionnaires undertaken in the context of the Forum on the Reform of the State, IEP de Bordeaux and DIRE (Ministry for Public Services and the Reform of the State), May 2000.
3. F. Fukuyama, 'Second Thoughts. The Last Man in the Bottle', *The National Interest*, 56, Summer 1999.
4. *Dictionnaire du XXIe siècle* (Paris: 1998), p. 349.
5. M. Houellebecq, *Extension du domaine de la lutte* (Paris: Maurice Nadaud, 1994).
6. L. Cohen-Tanugi, 'L'Etat dans la construction européenne: integration juridique ou politique?', in R. Lenoir and J. Lesourne, op. cit., pp. 156–67.
7. J.S. Nye, 'Response to Francis Fukuyama', *The National Interest*, 56, Summer 1999, 43–4, 44.
8. V. Wright and S. Cassese, 'La Restructuration des Etats en Europe', in V. Wright and S. Cassese (eds), *La recomposition de l'Etat en Europe* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996).

9. Ibid.
10. Rosanvallon, op. cit.
11. A. Schonfield, *Le Capitalisme Aujourd'hui* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).
12. E. Suleiman, *Les Ressorts Cachés de la Réussite Française* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1995).
13. P. Grémion, *Le Pouvoir Périphérique* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1976).
14. *Le Comité des établissements de crédit et des entreprises d'investissement* (Cecei) is the body that regulates the French banking sector. As the supervisory authority of the banking sector, it is formed of eleven members representing other regulatory bodies (such as the Stock Exchange Commission), and is chaired by the Governor of the Banque de France, Jean-Claude Trichet.
15. Speech given during the summer conference of the 'Mouvement des Citoyens', in Perpignan, on 29 August 1999, and quoted in *Le Monde*, 29–30 August 1999, p. 14.
16. Claude Allègre was Minister for Education from June 1997 to the spring of 2000. He was replaced by Jack Lang following a government reshuffle.
17. Allègre's successor, Roger Schwartzenberg, decided to build another particle accelerator in the Paris region. However, the Franco-British project is still going ahead.
18. *Le Monde*, 24 June 1999.
19. G.T. Di Lampedusa, *The Leopard* (translated by A. Colquhoun) (London: Collins, 1961).
20. P.A. Delhommais and E. Izraelewicz, 'Le dernier combat des Trésoriers', *Le Monde*, 6 August 1999.
21. *Le Monde*, 18 August 1999.
22. *Le Point*, 2 May 1981.
23. *Le Monde*, 7 January 1999.
24. J. Mivielle, *La Rhétorique de la 'gauche plurielle' et ses usages* (IEP de Bordeaux: Mémoire, June 2000), p. 62.
25. Mivielle, op. cit., argues that the rhetoric of the 'plural left' is difficult to transfer to the right.
26. Edith Cresson's inaugural speech at the conference of 26 and 27 September 1991, at the ENA on the role of the state in European and international economy.
27. P. Jarreau, 'Barrages contre les Impôts', *Le Monde*, 11 September 2000.
28. A good example of the sometimes surreal nature of these debates may be found in the conflict between rival proponents of the Republic and democracy. See M. Agulhon, "'Républicain" à la française', *La revue Tocqueville*, XIII/1 (1992), 107; R. Debray, *Que vive le République* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1989); M. Sadoun, *La démocratie en France*, 2 vols (Paris: Essais/Gallimard, 2000).

4

Redefining the Franco-German Relationship

Jean-Marc Trouille

France and Germany's special relationship and its role as a 'motor' of European integration are unique within international relations.¹ Since 1963, the partnership between the two countries has been formalized by treaty (the Elysée Treaty), which established bi-annual Franco-German summits, coordination committees for economic and monetary policy and for foreign affairs, joint commissions of experts, frequent exchange of civil servants, and numerous collaborative projects in the fields of education and culture.² At the beginning of the twenty-first century, France and Germany are cooperating more closely, and in a greater number of areas than has ever been the case between any other countries before: not least politics and European affairs, but also the economy, finance, trade and industry,³ telecommunications, science, research and technology, aeronautics, space, defence and security, police, espionage, weapons, nuclear waste recycling, media, education, culture, town twinning, youth exchanges. Both countries have drawn upon their bilateral relationship to attain domestic and multilateral goals at the European level: the initiative for the Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1979, the Single Market in 1985 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1991, as well as the establishment of the European Central Bank and subsequent launch of the single currency in 1999 can all be chalked up to the Franco-German relationship.

And yet, beyond this dense network of contacts and joint projects, a number of Franco-German disagreements over European policies surfaced in the late 1990s which seemed to throw the special relationship into question. The path leading towards European Monetary Union was often obstructed by diverging monetary philosophies, and different visions of the future of Europe became more apparent, making it difficult to adopt a common stance on treaty reform. The strength of

the Franco-German tandem also became less obvious in a European Union of fifteen member states than it was in a Community of six to nine countries, and will be diluted further as a result of enlargement towards central and eastern Europe. Furthermore, the principle of Franco-German parity, which became a highly controversial issue at the European Council Summit of Nice in December 2000, may become more difficult to sustain in an enlarged EU with Germany as its centre of gravity. In view of these differences and the changed nature of the integration project itself, it seems appropriate to revisit Franco-German relations and to ask whether Franco-German cooperation still constitutes a valid model or a prerequisite for the furthering of European integration. In doing so, this chapter will also examine the implications of changed Franco-German relations for France's attempts to redefine its own identity, role and place in the European integration project, and to retain some of the *grandeur* lost in the Cold War and decolonization processes, in other words, to maintain its status as a world power.

The rhetoric of friendship

The idea of a bilateral 'friendship treaty' binding two member states of the European Union (where nations share sovereignty in numerous domains and as such can only be 'friendly' states) has to be understood in the context of historic enmity and the post-war desire to overcome the past: from 1870 to 1945, three major conflicts opposed the two states and their citizens. No fewer than twenty-three wars set French against Germans since the Reformation: nineteen of them took place on German soil, whilst the last four took place on French territory.⁴ This history of conflict has generated vivid memories amongst the French and the German populations which still leave some mark today.⁵

The historical context of the Elysée Treaty gives it political legitimacy and allows it to be dressed in a rhetoric of friendship, which is often seen as an end in itself. Political discourse tends to idealize the Franco-German relationship, more on the French than on the German side.⁶ This discourse is frequently accompanied by the staging of political rituals symbolizing the reconciliation of what de Gaulle referred to as 'les Gaulois et les Germains':⁷ for example, de Gaulle's and Adenauer's joint prayers in 1962 in Rheims cathedral (symbol of the Carolingian Empire, where Charlemagne was crowned), or the much-publicized image of Mitterrand and Kohl mourning hand in hand in

Verdun in 1984. It was also illustrated more recently, on 22 January 2003, when the fortieth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty was celebrated with great pomp in the Palace of Versailles (a place also laden with memories of Franco-German conflicts) with a historic assembly of the two national parliaments.⁸ Friendship between the two countries was most obviously personalized in the special relationship between some of their leaders, in particular Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt (from 1974 to 1981) and Mitterrand and Kohl (between 1982 and 1995), when the French President would refer to 'mon ami Helmut'.

Beyond the rhetoric of friendship – implying goodwill, reciprocity and solidarity – French political leaders also used the discourse of common national interest. In the early 1990s, they were eager to assert in joint communiqués following Franco-German summits that the interests of the two countries were identical. The logic at the heart of the Franco-German relationship – that the result of cooperation outweighed any national difference – characterizes the French approach to European integration. However, by the end of the 1990s the political 'win-win' discourse had run into difficulties with regard to both the Franco-German relationship and European integration more generally. In fact, the closer both countries come together, the more obvious and blatant are their differences, not least linguistic, cultural and attitudinal.⁹ In key areas – transatlantic relations (always a bone of contention between the two, with the recent exception of the joint Franco-German position against armed intervention in Iraq), industrial policy, agricultural policy, macroeconomic policy, the management of EU enlargement, and the nature of the integration project itself – France and Germany have proved to have different visions.

Franco-German relations in the 1980s and 1990s

Since the 1980s, five main phases can be identified in Franco-German relations. The first corresponds to the period before 1990, when Germany was still divided, did not enjoy full sovereignty and relied upon its special relationship with France in order to be able to play a role on the European scene. France remained the dominant political partner, whilst West Germany was the strongest economic partner. The balance of power between Paris and Bonn rested upon the subtle equilibrium of 'the bomb and the mark'.¹⁰ Certain periods were particularly fruitful for European construction: the Giscard-Schmidt entente in the late 1970s saw the establishment of the European Council and of the

European Monetary System (EMS), whilst the second half of the 1980s, dominated by the Mitterrand-Kohl-Delors trio, paved the way for the Single European Market and the Single Currency.

The second, transitional phase – from 1989 to 1990 – marked a major turning point. The fall of the Berlin Wall, combined with the upheavals in central and eastern Europe, brought about an entirely new geopolitical situation on the continent. Germany achieved more than the unity of its people and its territory: it also regained sovereignty whilst enjoying the benefit of a consolidated geopolitical position in the centre of Europe. Notwithstanding these changes in the balance of power, the Franco-German entente survived German unification, thanks to the cohesion of the Mitterrand-Kohl pairing. Initial tensions between the two leaders, due to Mitterrand's failure to conceptualize a post-Cold War Europe, lasted only a couple of months after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Maastricht Treaty and European Monetary Union (EMU) were Mitterrand's means of anchoring Germany more firmly to western Europe after German unification. Arguably, the price Kohl agreed to pay for unification was to give up the Deutschmark, a crucial symbol of identity and unity for German citizens who accepted the 'deal' only with great reluctance.

During the third, post-unification, phase of cooperation – from 1991 to 1997 – Germany began to take the initiative, putting clear emphasis on the political construction of Europe. France played a more hesitant role during the 1991 negotiations in Maastricht, apparently fearful of conceding too much power to supra-national institutions. France's hesitations grew after its 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, which was approved only by a narrow majority. France seemed to struggle with the contradictions of its own European policy: between the concept of Europe as a potential superpower and a reluctance to lose attributes of national sovereignty, and between economic interdependence and the desire to protect the national economy.

At the level of personalities, the end of the Mitterrand era severely disrupted Franco-German relations. German political leaders found Jacques Chirac unpredictable and disconcerting. On taking office, Chirac refused to commit himself on monetary union for a full five months. His first major decisions – the abolition of French conscription and the launch of a new series of nuclear tests in the Pacific Ocean – were taken without consulting his German partner, contrary to his two predecessors' practice. Moreover, the tensions of cohabitation were evident in the foreign policy sphere, and particularly in relation to European Union affairs.¹¹

During the fourth phase, from 1997 to 2000, however, the ambiguities of Germany's position became clearer, too. At the European summit in Amsterdam in June 1997, the German delegation appeared to prioritize macroeconomic stability over the institutional reform necessary to prepare for enlargement.¹² In addition, Germany's inability to accept further extensions of qualified majority voting hampered progress at Amsterdam. Disagreements within the German government, leading to the departure of Oskar Lafontaine, also prevented the French government from pursuing its proposals for more cooperation in employment and social policy. Germany's presidency of the Council in 1999 was heavily criticized by French leaders, who accused their German counterparts of promoting national interests at the expense of community consensus. In particular, the French felt antagonized by the German government's insistence on greater domestic contributions to agricultural spending. In the event, the German chancellor, whose position was weakened in his home country, was not in a position to block the progress of the Berlin summit during the German presidency – as the French well knew – and had to give way to French demands. Some consensus on budgetary issues could certainly have been reached if relations between political leaders of the two countries had not been so strained at the time. This incident marked a low point in Franco-German relations.

To a large extent, hesitations on the German side of the Franco-German relationship during this period reflected a change of government after the long Kohl era, similar to the earlier destabilization of French policy following Mitterrand's departure. For the new chancellor Gerhard Schröder, at least during his first year in office, the Franco-German alliance meant sometimes a necessity dictated by reason, sometimes a burden. His initial intention to encourage a trilateral axis involving London, Bonn and Paris in order to emancipate Germany from its too exclusive French partner only aroused suspicion in Paris.¹³ Ideologically, the two social democratic governments after 1997 clashed on labour market policy. For domestic political reasons and perhaps also to boost his international standing, Schröder published a joint statement with British prime minister Tony Blair on the modernization of European social democracy, which called for flexible labour markets. His failure to consult French prime minister Jospin further jeopardized good relations between the French and German leaders.

Some of these early misunderstandings may, however, have been part of a process of adjustment to power of the German social

democrats, who had long been shut out of office. A weakened Gerhard Schröder acknowledged the fact that he needed French support, not only on the European scene, but also in internal politics and that no alternative could be envisaged to the Franco-German alliance in the short term. The German chancellor's historic address to the French National Assembly on 30 November 1999 (followed on 22 June 2000 by Jacques Chirac's speech on Europe at the German Parliament in Berlin, in which he proposed to create a European constitution) was widely interpreted as a cementing of the Franco-German alliance. At the same time, Germany's earlier hesitations about European integration gave way to a renewed advocacy of European federalism. In May 2000, when foreign minister Joschka Fischer wrested the political initiative from the French (about to start their presidency of the Council) with his 'unofficial' plea for a federal Europe, political leadership reverted to the German government. The long-awaited speech on Europe by Lionel Jospin a year later was primarily an attempt, despite making some constructive proposals, not to leave Germany a clear field.

However, the worst was to come. Franco-German relations hit a new low at the EU summit in Nice, which took place in December 2000 under French presidency. Throughout the negotiations, German assertiveness encountered French suspicion, and disagreement became so blatant that most observers predicted the end of the two countries' special relationship.

A fifth phase began in 2001, with the two countries taking stock of the damage done and underlining their joint desire to redress the abysmal state of their relationship in the aftermath of the Amsterdam, Berlin and Nice summits. In particular, it was acknowledged at the seventy-ninth Franco-German Summit in Schwerin in July 2002 that differences on European affairs had to be resolved rapidly to give Franco-German relations a new impulse at the fortieth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty in January 2003. Hence the Franco-German deal reached in October 2002 on the future financing of the CAP, allowing enlargement to be formally agreed at the Copenhagen summit.

To sum up, the events of the 1990s appear to have fundamentally altered the Franco-German relationship, with political leadership now shared more evenly between the two countries than was the case prior to German unification. As a result, the debate about the future of European integration opened up, with differences becoming more apparent. In economic affairs, too, the old balance of power shifted decisively.

Economic cooperation and convergence: rebalancing the relationship?

In the economic domain, the degree of interdependence between France and Germany has no equivalent between any other nations. Each of the two countries is the other's leading trade partner and an important provider of foreign direct investments to the other; each has developed more company-to-company ties than with any other country.¹⁴ No fewer than 2500 German companies are present on the French market, and 1500 French businesses are settled in Germany,¹⁵ meaning that more than 700,000 jobs depend on Franco-German cooperation.

However, on the whole, macroeconomic policy has tended to converge on German rather than French standards, particularly as regards monetary policy.¹⁶ French political and economic elites made considerable efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to convert to the German model of monetary stability, by accepting the principle of the independence of the Central Bank, by rejecting the temptation to devalue the national currency in order to keep exports competitive (in other words, the strong franc policy), and by adopting German-style budgetary discipline and monetary orthodoxy. Arguably, however, France has sought to control the convergence process to suit its own domestic political and economic circumstances. It has been argued that the single currency policy was masterminded by French leaders in order to regain some measure of budgetary control in an era of de facto German monetary dominance and competitive deflation.¹⁷

Analysis of the motives behind French commitment to EMU show that French fears of Germany's potential strength, far from disappearing, remain a permanent feature of French political thinking. In order to continue to exert some control on post-unification Germany, Germany had to be bound more tightly to the West. A deal was struck between France, which favoured broad participation in the euro in order to dilute Germany's weight, and Germany, which insisted almost obsessively during the Amsterdam summit in June 1997 on the stability pact as an essential safeguard for budgetary discipline within the eurozone. The underlying differences in monetary philosophy did not disappear, however, and they became evident in the debates on the stability pact. The French proposal to set up an 'economic government' as a means of regaining political control of monetary policy clashed with the German conception of an independent Central Bank and could not be accepted by Germany. Similarly, disagreement between

Paris and Bonn in 1998 regarding the nomination of the director of the ECB highlighted once again the two countries' opposing views about political control of EMU. With hindsight it appears that the ECB is not just a clone of the Bundesbank, and that the French concept of a flexible euro and a eurozone open to Southern Europe has won through.¹⁸ This uneasy compromise has important consequences for European integration: on one hand, it has allowed a qualitative breakthrough in the integration process; on the other, it has not been matched by political consistency and has thus contributed to problems of governance.

Franco-German relations were also put under pressure in 1998–99 by the failure of several joint industrial and financial alliances, which called into question the French assumption that bilateral industrial cooperation would follow logically from political cooperation¹⁹ and provide a safeguard to French businesses in the context of globalization. In several cases the French companies felt that their supposedly 'natural' ally had let them down in favour of deals with British partners. A proposed alliance for joint European share-dealing between London and Frankfurt challenged cooperation between the Paris and Frankfurt stock exchanges. At the same time, whilst the project of defence industry restructuring organized around Matra and the German Dasa made no headway, talks of a merger between Dasa and British Aerospace caused serious concern amongst French political leaders and industrialists, as it had the potential to create a European giant and leave the French isolated.

Shortly afterwards, the newly elected German federal government declared its intention to withdraw progressively from nuclear energy. This move was bound to have tremendous effects on French nuclear activities as a whole, and more specifically on the viability of the European Pressurized Water Reactor (EPR), a construction project involving both the French Framatome and the German Siemens-Kraftwerk-Union (the nuclear appendage of Siemens). In addition, Germany is a major client of nuclear waste recycling activities at the La Hague plant in the Cotentin Peninsula. Moreover, in spring 1999 the German telecommunications giant Deutsche Telecom announced its decision to merge with Telecom Italia without prior consultation with France Telecom, and despite having developed close ties with this French partner over a decade.

Interestingly, none of these alternative projects materialized. Nonetheless, they had an adverse effect on the already strained Franco-German entente. Large-scale alliances with American companies, such

as the merger between Daimler and Chrysler in 1998, or the takeover of Bankers Trust by the Deutsche Bank, and more generally the apparent conversion of a number of German top managers to the principles of the Anglo-Saxon shareholder value, seemed to indicate to the French that Germany would prefer to prioritize relations with Britain and the USA rather than with her traditional French partner. This series of failures of Franco-German industrial and financial alliances mirrored the breakdown of political cooperation in the summer of 1999.

With the resumption of political agreement, however, came support for greater economic and industrial cooperation. Bilateral industrial megamergers were announced between *Aérospatiale-Matra* and *Dasa* in the aircraft, defence and space industry, followed by *Framatome* and *Siemens* in the nuclear energy sector, and by *Hoechst* and *Rhône-Poulenc* in the field of biotechnology with the launch of *Aventis* in December 1999. Most of these mergers were, in fact, the consolidation of already pre-established partnerships, and were primarily dictated by business strategies rather than by a political logic.²⁰ But these new large-scale cooperations were nonetheless beneficial to Franco-German relations at a difficult time. They could also be seen as responding to a logic of regional preference: French and German industrialists pooled their strengths to build an integrated European industry in strategic sectors of activity which are essential for the sovereignty of the European Union, and more importantly for its autonomy from the US.

The challenge of enlargement

The enlargement of the European Union to include a total of twenty-five member states in May 2004 and twenty-seven by 2007 raises questions about the nature of European integration itself, and has severely tested the Franco-German alliance. Chancellor Kohl's invitations to Poland and other central European countries to join the Union immediately were made without prior consultation of French leaders, and did not have their support. French politicians have consistently stressed the need to control the enlargement process in order not to sacrifice cohesion, whilst for Germany enlargement has often appeared an end in itself. Germany's greater economic investment in central and eastern Europe,²¹ and the greater potential for political leadership this brings with it, contrast with France's more cautious approach.

The enlargement project also poses new questions for the future of European integration and the locus of political leadership. Will the

Franco-German tandem still be able to gather momentum in an enlarged Union and to pull a European train which will be longer, slower and heavier than ever? In addition to the already existing antagonism within the EU between federalists and sovereignists, a new divide is emerging, this time between large and small member states. The pre-1973 EEC consisted of three big states and three small or medium states, a situation which was more favourable to Franco-German leadership. But successive enlargements have led towards a more diversified Europe. Since nine of the ten accession countries joining the EU in May 2004 are small states, the Union will consist of nineteen small and only six large member states. Given these uncertainties, it can be argued that the special alliance between Paris and Berlin will continue to be necessary for future European integration, precisely because Europe will be more diverse, but that this necessary precondition is no longer sufficient. Increasingly, leadership in Europe will have to be carried out by more than two nations. Britain, undoubtedly, has the potential to play a more important role on the European scene than in the past, if this country overcomes its own domestic constraints, and if both France and Germany are willing to share leadership.²² Other important member states like Italy, Spain and Poland are more likely to exert a strong regional influence rather than to play a leadership role in the EU. Poland, which has already established trilateral political relations with Germany and France since 1991 (referred to as the 'Weimar Triangle'), would be the sole candidate in central Europe for joint leadership.

Although it is in France's and Germany's prime interest to ensure a smooth and efficient enlargement process, it can hardly be claimed that the two countries have established a common *Ostpolitik* in this respect. The outcome of the Nice summit of December 2000 was more modest than had been hoped. Amongst all the institutional questions at stake at the Nice summit, negotiations surrounding the complex re-weighting of member states' votes in the EU's decision-making council of ministers highlighted the politically highly sensitive issue of parity between France and Germany. Germany, with nearly 23 million more inhabitants than France, Britain or Italy, asked for this demographic discrepancy to be taken into account. But France's insistence on retaining political parity with Germany in EU decision-making reflected the difficulty faced by the Franco-German alliance in adjusting to a more assertive unified Germany. It also illustrated France's lack of motivation in the question of enlargement.²³ In the end France's desire in Nice to preserve the symbolic fifty-year-old equilibrium between the

two partners prevailed. In the early 1950s, parity was a concession of France to the young West German state. This principle of parity was reiterated in the Elysée Treaty and, later, by Helmut Kohl at the time of German unification. But in 2000, the difference was that parity had become a concession made to France by Germany.

Conclusion

French-German bilateral cooperation has developed over the years to become second nature for both parties concerned.²⁴ Germany has become an unavoidable, almost compulsory reference in French inner political debates. Even if their bonds chafe sometimes, the French and the Germans have gone through a long process of learning from one another and of working together. Interdependence has been actively sought and is particularly evident in the economic sphere.

However, in the years following German unification, and particularly since the end of the Mitterrand-Kohl era, differences between the world views of the two partners have come increasingly to the fore. Both partners have had to adjust to internal changes, and to changes in their respective size and influence, most obviously the greater political weight of Germany. Both have had to adapt their European policies in response to the pace of integration, transformations in the geopolitical landscape and shifts within the international economic order. In particular, eastward enlargement of the EU demonstrates that the Franco-German relationship has become more and more frequently 'a struggle to cooperate'.²⁵ On the other hand, it is possible to argue that it is differences of outlook, rather than similarities, which help to cement the Franco-German alliance, defined by European Commissioners Pascal Lamy and Günter Verheugen as 'an exercise of constructive confrontation', a form of political voluntarism which 'does not rely on power, but on conviction'.²⁶

Perhaps more than differences between the two partners, the challenges of managing a more diverse Europe and of dealing with a more determined US-British coalition constitute the most difficult test for the Franco-German relationship. Even where France and Germany reach agreement, their capacity for leadership is undermined by the new geopolitical fault-lines, as the recent split within the EU between Atlanticists and those advocating an autonomous defence policy has forcefully shown. In tomorrow's enlarged Union, European leadership may have to be exerted by more than two nations. But even if a privileged Franco-German relationship is no longer sufficient, it will remain

an essential requirement for further European integration. In choosing to align itself with the German federalist camp or the Anglo-Nordic intergovernmentalist camp, France has a leadership role to play – ‘divided and defensive, but still pivotal’²⁷ – in determining the future direction of Europe.

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5

French Subnational Government and the European Union: the Relocation and Reformulation of Governance and the Restructuring of Policy Networks

David Howarth

The impact of European integration on state–subnational relations in France should be examined in the context of the wider debate on the development of a ‘Europe of the Regions’.¹ European integration, in so far as it potentially affects subnational authorities, refers here to the development of European Regional Policy (ERP) and other European policies and directives, the creation of the new Committee of the Regions (CoR) and improved regional representation in Brussels, in addition to economic integration more generally.

Although it might be supposed that European integration increasingly enables French subnational authorities (SNAs) to bypass, or at least diminish, the control of national states over certain areas of policy-making, several authors argue that its effect has been grossly over-estimated,² and that the result may be to strengthen the state in relation to SNAs.³ It is clear that considerable variance exists in the effort and success of SNAs to gain access to EU decision-making,⁴ and the ‘Europe of the Regions’ should be understood more in terms of increased SNA activism encouraged by European integration and the partnership principle involved in the provision of European funds and transfrontier cooperation.⁵

There is a growing body of literature on the impact of European developments upon SNAs in the member states and centre–periphery relations – normally labelled the ‘Europeanization’ of national governance⁶ – and on the EU as a unique system of ‘multi-level governance’.⁷

However, to date the literature appears to lack a structured framework through which to analyse the modification of *all* SNA activity due to the process of Europeanization. An attempt is made here to establish such a framework applied to France. It is useful to analyse the impact of European integration upon SNAs in terms of the ‘three Rs’: *relocation* of governance, its *reformulation*, and the *restructuring* of policy networks which influences governance. Relocation of governance refers to the assumption of control over policy-making by SNAs in such a way that the state’s direct influence is eliminated – or the reverse. Reformulation of governance refers to the modification of the roles and/or influence of different actors in the policy-making process. It is to some combination of these two processes that most studies refer when they announce or predict the transfer of power from the centre to the periphery or the reverse. The restructuring of policy networks refers to the modification of the presence, role and influence of the various actors which seek to influence policy-making from both inside and outside the institutions of governance.⁸ The increased presence of SNA representatives at the European level does not amount to any ‘relocation of governance’, let alone real influence.⁹ However, the resulting restructuring of policy networks has some impact upon the policy-making process. The relocation and reformulation of governance and the restructuring of policy networks can potentially take place at both the national and European levels.

Decentralization in France

The impact of European developments upon governance in the different member states depends to a large extent on pre-existing institutional frameworks. In France, the Jacobin legacy of a strong state has placed clear limits on regional activism. Political decentralization has, however, changed the parameters within which SNAs function, giving them greater opportunities to take advantage of European funds and policies, and also increasing their legitimacy (particularly for regions and departments). The most significant transfer of powers to SNAs in France took place as a result of the Defferre decentralization reforms of 1982–84, prior to the major European developments of the 1980s and 1990s.

On the other hand, the impact of European integration upon decentralization has been of limited direct importance. One example is the Commission’s involvement in financing and formulating vocational training programmes via the European Social Fund (ESF) since the late

1960s, which provided a justification for transferring this competence to the French regions upon their creation as administrative entities in 1973. However, many SNAs have also become increasingly dynamic – encouraged by French national governments – both as a result of European economic integration and the commercial and financial links that this has spawned as well as in order to profit from the potential benefits of economic integration.

Of the three levels of French SNAs, regions have potentially the most power to gain from the development of European policies, especially with regard to the manner in which European structural funds are distributed and because strategies regarding the use of funds are developed at the regional level. However, in the absence of an established hierarchy between the SNAs, the departments and communes (especially the larger cities) have also sought to take advantage of European developments, either in cooperation with the regions or independently. Moreover, in the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the 24 French seats are divided equally between representatives of the three levels of subnational government. Smith demonstrates that the expansion of the European structural funds has not increased the influence of French regions more than the departments, either in relation to the state or in relation to each other.¹⁰

Devolved policy areas which have been subject to European programme developments or legislation (notably in the context of the Single European Market Programme) are listed in Table 5.1, which shows the distribution of responsibility between the three levels of subnational government.

Table 5.1 Devolved policy areas which have been subject to European legislation

<i>Policy area</i>	<i>Commune</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Region</i>
Economic development			✓
Environment		✓	✓
Vocational training			✓
Social assistance	✓	✓	
Rural development		✓	
Local transport	✓	✓	✓
Housing provision for EU migrants	✓		
Public utilities for EU migrants	✓		
Trading standards	✓	✓	✓
Consumer protection	✓	✓	✓
Workplace health and safety	✓	✓	✓

Overall, it is more correct to refer to a reformulation of governance rather than a relocation. The state has continued to perform the central coordinating role, given the complexity of subnational government (with three, often competing, levels), the state's continued financial contributions and the nearly constant involvement of central government field services as a result of the state's considerable technical expertise. In terms of the restructuring of policy networks at the EU level, the transfer of powers has meant that SNAs are potentially more interested in the European policy-making process. Moreover, the decision to allow diplomatic activity (article 65 of the 1982 reform) enabled SNAs to establish representation at the European level and encouraged the reinforcement of links with regions in other countries. As early as 1986, the Rhône-Alpes region joined with Lombardy, Catalonia and Baden-Württemberg to create the Four Motors Group – to encourage scientific, technical and cultural cooperation – with a joint office in Brussels.

The expansion of diplomatic activity – including one case of an agreement between the Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur region and the Tunisian state – was sufficiently great to upset some central government officials and politicians who perceived this development as an affront to the indivisibility of French foreign policy-making. This led to the attempt by the state to place clear limits on the relocation of governance and the clarification of article 65 by prime ministerial circulars (in 1983, 1985 and 1987) which limited transfrontier cooperation to adjoining transfrontier regions, subject to government authorization and without the conclusion of binding agreements.¹¹ The repeated violation of these rules led to the reinforcement of state control in the 6 February 1992 administrative reform. However, once the agreements are established, SNAs can act with managerial autonomy.

The impact of European regional policy

France is not one of the major beneficiaries of European structural funds: the European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund-Guidance (EAGGF-Guidance), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).¹² France was to have received 9.65 per cent of EU funds in the 1994–99 period (see Table 5.2) and is set to receive a smaller percentage in the 2000–2006 period (Table 5.3): 7.96 per cent of funds committed to the 15 current EU member states, but only 6.34 per cent of total structural funds including amounts committed to the pre-accession countries, which

will inevitably drop further in the period starting in 2007. The 1999 reorganization of the structural funds has resulted in a decline (in real terms) of 16 to 39 per cent in European spending in the different French regions, except for Centre and Ile-de-France which are to enjoy increased funds over the 2000–2006 period as part of the government's new urban regeneration programme.

Table 5.2 Structural funds allocated to France during the 1994–99 period

<i>Objective</i>	<i>General purpose / Funding sources / Coverage</i>	<i>Committed funding in billion ECU (euro) at 1994 prices</i>
1	Stimulate economic activity in economically underdeveloped areas (<75% of EU average). ERDF, ESF, EAGGF. Overseas departments (DOM), Corsica, part of Nord-pas-de-Calais.	2.190 (860 per capita in the areas covered). 2.33% of total objective 1 spending
2	Assistance for areas in industrial decline (with unemployment greater than EU average). ERDF, ESF. Areas of all regions except Ile-de-France, Corsica, Limousin and the DOM.	1.763 (121 per capita in the areas covered). 24.55% of total objective 2 spending
3	Integration and training of the unemployed. ESF.	2.562
4	Training to improve adaptability of workforce. ESF.	0.641
5a	Assistance for the agricultural sector. EAGGF, ERDF, ESF.	1.932
5b	Assistance for vulnerable rural areas. Areas of all regions except Ile-de-France, Corsica, Nord-pas-de-Calais, Picardie and the DOM.	2.238 (229 per capita in the areas covered). 33.60% of total objective 5b spending
CIs	Community Initiatives: vocational training and economic development programmes (etc.) proposed by the Commission. ERDF, ESF, EAGGF.	1.421
Total		12.748. 9.65% of allocated structural funds

Source: See Commission of the EC. *The Structural Funds in 1994, Sixth Annual Report*, 1996.

Table 5.3 Structural funds allocated to France during the 2000–2006 period^a

<i>Objective</i>	<i>General purpose/coverage</i>	<i>Committed funding in billion euro, 1999 prices</i>
1	As previous: stricter application of the 75% criteria.	3.254. 2.55% of objective 1 spending (excluding transitional spending)
1 (transition)		0.551
2	Financial assistance for regions facing major change in the industrial, services, and fisheries sectors, rural areas in serious decline and disadvantaged urban areas.	5.437. 27.55% of objective 2 spending (excluding transitional spending)
2 (transition)		0.613
3	Financial assistance for regions not covered by the other objectives (especially encouraging the modernization of systems of education, training and employment).	4.540. 18.88% of total objective 3 spending
FIFG	Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance: support for the fishing industry (outside objective 1).	0.225. 20.34% of FIFG funding
Total		14,620. 7.96% of structural funds committed to the 15 current EU member states. ^a

Notes to Table and Sources:

^a These calculations exclude Community Initiative (CI) funding for the 2000–2006 period (10.44 billion euro), which has yet to be committed to different member states, and funding committed to pre-accession countries.

Commission of the EC, *Eleventh Annual Report on the Structural Funds (1999)*, 13.11.2000.

The development of ERP has resulted in a minimal relocation of governance at either the national or EU levels. The system of Community Support Frameworks (CSFs), created in 1988, was designed to provide funding to SNA projects in a range of areas – principally economic and infrastructural development – over a four- to five-year period. The CSFs covered 90 per cent of the ERDF budget (which doubled in 1988). In France, the provision of structural funds takes place in the context of regional planning systems established in the decentralization reforms. The state – through its regional prefects and prefectural staff – controls regional applications for most European funds, acting as gatekeeper. In July 1999, Dominique Voynet, the minister responsible for regional

planning in the Jospin government – and a vocal supporter of continued decentralization – proposed the transfer of this gatekeeper role to the regional presidents. This would have amounted to a substantial relocation of governance. It was blocked by members of the government – led by the interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement – on the grounds that SNAs could not have direct links with the European Commission and that the region could not be placed in a hierarchically superior position to the other levels of subnational government. At the same time, the state sought to increase the responsibility of SNAs, notably with regard to inappropriately allocated European funds and ‘lost’ receipts. Thus a compromise was reached, resulting in a potential reformulation of governance: management would henceforth be ‘coordinated’ between the prefect and the regional president and the committees which examine the applications for European funding would be co-chaired by the two officials, although the prefect would retain final decision-making power.¹³

The state also establishes overall national priorities with regard to the allocation of funds earmarked for France. It does not necessarily heed the wishes of SNAs expressed collectively in the CNADT (*Conseil national de l'aménagement et du développement du territoire*), the body in which the representatives of the national associations of subnational elected officials (at the communal, departmental and regional levels) meet to agree upon territorial planning and development objectives. In July 1999, the Jospin government – against the expressed view of the CNADT – decided to redistribute structural funds worth 957 million francs over the next seven years (2000–2006) to disadvantaged urban zones in the Ile-de-France and Lyon (Rhône-Alpes). The CNADT argued that the wealthiest regions (notably Ile-de-France) should not receive structural funds to improve conditions in poorer areas in those regions.

The continued predominance of the state is further assured by its monopoly over French representation in Council negotiations on the overall organization of EU funds. There is limited, but no necessary, regional input. The overall organization of the provision of regional aid (the criteria according to which proposals are accepted or rejected) is determined by the Commission in negotiation with member state government representatives within Council working groups. Moreover, the overall regional fund budget and the structure of the ERDF is set in the multi-annual budget packages agreed upon by the member state ministers of finance by unanimous voting (article 235). While more influential subnational units of government (notably, the Belgian regions and to a certain extent the German Länder) have had some

impact upon national policy positions on the general organization of the ERDF, the influence of French SNAs has been minimal.¹⁴ The French government consulted the regions and departments during the negotiations on the restructuring of the structural funds in 1992–93 and again in 1998–99, but there is no evidence that French positions were in any way altered by this input.

Where the influence of SNAs over European funding is potentially greatest is in the allocation of funds in the context of the negotiations with the state and Commission representatives on the multi-annual regional plans. However, even here SNA influence is limited. It depends more on the region's relative wealth (thus its reliance on state funding) and the influence of local political elites in national government. The state will tend to have more difficulty rejecting an important project developed by a powerful region. However, those regions which benefit the most from European assistance tend to be the poorest, over which the state is likely to have the most influence (for example, the overseas departments, which fall into the objective 1 category). Moreover, the French state (like others) has been able to manipulate the allocation of ERDF finance in breach of the rule on matching funds (the principle of additionality). Much to the annoyance of SNAs, the state often uses European funds not as additional finance but rather as a substitute, thus withdrawing some of the financial assistance it might otherwise have provided. The replacement of state funds by European funds has been used by state authorities to increase their margin of manoeuvre in the financing of certain programmes. The margin of manoeuvre will decrease with the substantial drop in the amount of structural funds earmarked for France for the 2000–2006 period. However, the decline in European funds has been compensated by a projected increase in the amount of total state regional spending over this period (to be matched by SNA spending) which suggests that the state will continue to exert as much influence as in the past in the establishment of SNA spending priorities.

SNA expenditure outside the context of these plans – and thus beyond the control of the state – remains important. Up to 50 per cent of total expenditure of some regions is spent neither on administration nor multi-annual programmes arranged through the plans, but very little of this is European funding. Thus, it is not the development of ERP which has increased the financial margin of manoeuvre of the regions but rather the structure of devolved resources (taxes) and obligatory state block grants (that is, grants which are not linked to the development of any particular programme).

IDO and CIs and the limited relocation of governance

Where ERP has made a small difference in terms of increasing SNA margin of manoeuvre in relation to the state has been in the area of Commission-supplied funds which lie in some respects beyond the control of member state governments. Starting in 1978, the Commission was given the power to support projects via Integrated Development Operations (IDOs) that had not been pre-selected by national governments.¹⁵ The negotiations on the IDOs took place directly between many European SNAs and the Commission, without the necessary involvement of the state, as these programmes did not involve the principle of additionality. However, in pre-decentralization France, the state (regional prefectures) controlled local authority applications, while the French Treasury and national ministries managed the programmes in the departments. Balme and Jouve note that the most significant impact of the establishment of IDO programmes was to increase the activity of the field offices of some national ministries.¹⁶ While this did not lead to any meaningful increase in departmental autonomy, it contributed to a reformulation of governance, with departmental politicians and officials joining forces with the prefecture and the field offices of national ministries in order to arrange bids for European funding, although they only had a minimal role in the management of these programmes.

These Commission funds were reorganized as Community Initiative programmes (CIs) in 1988 and have amounted to approximately 9–10 per cent of the structural funds. The CIs include cross-border and inter-regional cooperation, rural development, support for the outermost regions, employment and vocational training, and adaptation to industrial change. For example, REGIS supports economic development in remote areas including the French overseas departments. The principle of additionality was applied, which effectively reinforced the state's gate-keeper role in spite of decentralization. Nonetheless, certain CIs have created some possible scope for the relocation of governance. Notably, INTERREG encourages transfrontier projects (thus bypassing the state): between 50 and 80 per cent of the INTERREG III funds allocated to the different countries will be devoted to transfrontier projects on the grounds that this form of cooperation has worked the best so far and is the easiest to put into operation.¹⁷ Its potential significance is increased in that it provides funds for SNAs which do not individually qualify for other programmes (authorized by article 10 of the ERDF regulations). Therefore, while decentralization made the cooperation of French SNAs possible, deliberate European policy has sought to encourage it.

However, in terms of the relocation of governance, the impact of the CIs must be qualified. The areas covered, notably vocational training and economic development, were previously devolved to the French regions and thus – especially in wealthier regions with larger non-allocated budgets – CIs have only marginally increased the scope for autonomous regional activity. In most cases, the CIs do not provide a large amount of financial assistance. The funds are spread over an excessive number of projects and a large amount is spent on administrative costs.¹⁸ Moreover, in the 1993 reform of the structural funds, the member states placed tighter guidelines on the provision of CIs, which previously had been almost entirely under the control of the Commission.

In any case, INTERREG has not been the success for which many had hoped. The cooperation in the Atlantic Arc has been limited to date. For the INTERREG IIC programme for the years 1996–99, the Atlantic Arc only provided its operational programme in May 1999 – two years later than required – leaving only a few months to consume the credits by the end of the year and a rush of often poorly conceived project proposals. Representatives of the French regions participating in the Arc complain that French governments delayed the submission of projects, notably because of disagreements between the Ministry of Finance and the ministry responsible for regional development.¹⁹ The management of French applications for CIs is of considerable importance to subnational government (and the further relocation and reformulation of governance) because after 2006 all the European structural funds will be replaced with programmes similar to INTERREG.

In its September 1999 reforms, the Jospin government moved cautiously towards granting SNAs greater control over the finances provided through certain CI programmes. The funds provided in the context of the INTERREG and Leader programmes are now supplied by the Commission directly to the SNAs, thus escaping the direct control of the regional prefecture, national ministries and the regional branch of the Treasury division of the Ministry of Finance (the *trésorier payeur général*). This reform amounts to a significant relocation of governance, at least in so far as the implementation of these CIs is concerned. It reflects the considerable pressure placed upon the socialist-led government by SNAs but also the desire to encourage more SNAs to apply for European funding. The reform sets a rather important precedent: the state remains the sole legal responsibility in the event that funds are misspent even though it has surrendered all direct control over their management.

State audit of structural funds thus assumes even greater importance with regard to the CIs. The Defferre reforms transformed state control over local authority budgets into an a posteriori control through the regional courts of auditors. However, the control of European funds has, many experts would argue, been more rigorous than the rules of French public accounting provide for state funding.²⁰ A special national body, the Interministerial Commission for the Coordination of Controls (CICC) was established specifically to audit the use of structural funds. This body involves the participation and expertise of the major inspectorates of the French state: the Financial, General Social Affairs, Administrative and General Agricultural inspectorates. The CICC investigates SNA accounts and presents an annual report to the European Commission providing a regular, mid-programme evaluation of the implementation of structural funding. Nonetheless, despite the role of the 'big sticks' of the French administration and the claims of relative effectiveness, the European Commission has still complained of faulty audit procedures: in 1996, it demanded that the French government reimburse 500 million francs of funds for which French SNAs did not possess receipts.

The impact of other EU developments

The development of other EC/EU policies and legislation has generally resulted in the relocation of governance *towards* the state away from SNAs. Although in areas of SNA jurisdiction and interest the state is encouraged to consult the regions, the development of European policies and legislation in those jurisdictions previously transferred to SNAs in the context of the decentralization reform has actually led to a reinforcement of the state's control of the state, normally via the coordination of prefectures and the technical assistance of the local field services of government ministries. Some European policies, notably the internal market and environmental policy, have imposed additional managerial responsibilities upon SNAs.²¹ However, the state remains the sole legal responsibility through the a priori control of the prefect.

In terms of the restructuring of policy networks at the EU level, the development of different EC/EU policies and legislation has encouraged the lobbying activity of SNAs (in addition to other local interests) in order to influence the European policy-making process with regard to directives and regulations of concern to particular SNAs.²² As with the organization of the structural funds, the importance of the Council in the formulation of European policies and legislation in

these areas encourages SNAs to focus their lobbying efforts on the national government and its representatives. The irony remains that SNAs are forced to lobby state representatives in order to influence the formulation of national positions in areas previously devolved. Yet in these areas it is politically difficult for French governments to take positions on particular European directives without previously consulting the national associations of SNAs and/or the authorities most concerned.

The creation of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and other recent EU institutional changes have not led to any relocation of governance in France. The control retained by the Council in most policy-making areas covered by the EU emphasizes the importance of French national positions in areas which can affect SNAs. The Treaty of European Union allows for the CoR to be consulted in particular areas of European law and policy-making when either the Council or the Commission decides that consultation is appropriate. The CoR may also issue an opinion on matters where it considers that specific regional interests are involved.²³ This can be considered a minor reformulation of governance. The consultation of regional opinion had existed prior to 1994, although in a smaller body without Treaty basis, and thus extra-legally. In terms of the restructuring of policy networks, the creation of the CoR has contributed to the increased presence of French SNAs in Brussels and has provided an important point of contact with both other national and European actors. This has also facilitated the development of common policy positions and programmes with regions in other member states (and thus increases the potential for the relocation of governance).

The strengthening of the European Parliament – in which members (MEPs) group themselves to represent regional and socio-economic interests – through the creation and extension of the co-decision procedure has probably been a more important institutional development in terms of the influence of SNAs over EU policy-making. The links formed with other member state MEPs have also been a vital channel for the representation of regional interests. French MEPs are elected on a national list rather than regional ones, as in Germany and the UK. Nonetheless, given the permitted accumulation of electoral mandates in France (*cumul des mandats*) about half of French MEPs also maintain an electoral link to the regions as local (municipal, departmental or regional) councillors, National Assembly members or Senators.²⁴ This ensures the expression of the interests of SNAs in the European Parliament.

The improved representation of SNAs in Brussels is a manifestation of the increased powers of French SNAs as well as the increased impact of EU legislation on SNAs. It can also be considered a factor potentially affecting the 'three Rs'. Seventeen out of 26 regions have established offices, alone, jointly or with regions from other countries. Representation in Brussels gives regions additional access points for influencing the policy-making process, beyond domestic (interministerial) politics. This does not relocate governance, in the context of the European legislative process, nor does it reformulate governance, because regions cannot – in most situations – be considered 'inside' policy-making actors as in the domestic policy-making process, but rather remain external interests. However, the presence of SNAs at the European level can, in certain areas of policy-making, lead to substantial restructuring of policy networks. Representation enables SNAs to follow the progress of European legislation more effectively, and representatives attempt to influence the formulation of French positions through contacts both in Brussels, with officials in the French permanent representation, and in Paris, with the ministries most concerned.

French regions have also coordinated their lobbying with the regions of other member states with similar interests and the establishment of lobbying associations based often on major INTERREG areas ('spatial policy networks') – defined principally by geography, shared problems and sectoral interests – with greater financial resources and greater potential influence to affect the formulation of Commission directives. French regions participate in several associations with offices in Brussels including the Four Motors Group, Atlantic Arc, *quartiers en crise* and RETI (*Régions européennes de technologie industrielle*). French governments have reacted to the lobbying activity of SNAs by attempting to impose strict conditions on this activity (which, however, are difficult to enforce) on the grounds that the French state alone is the legal representative of French interests at the European level.

It is difficult to assess the power of these regional associations. Most focus principally upon marketing their regions and cities and on trade promotion. They – like most interest groups – also provide information to the Commission and the EP. In some cases, the associations play a more direct role in the policy-making process: helping to set the agenda and contribute to the formulation of new programmes. Moreover, the Commission has itself created and funded some of these regional associations to work under EU programme objectives – notably RECITE (Regions and Cities of Europe). In this way, the restructuring of the policy-making process starts to

resemble the relocation of governance excluding the involvement of member state governments.²⁵

Despite improved representation, the French state continues to play an important coordination and information role. In the French permanent representation in Brussels, an official is responsible for specifically looking after regional interests. Likewise, officials in the SGCI – the *Secrétariat général du comité interministériel pour les relations économiques européennes*, the body responsible for administrative co-ordination at the national level on the development and implementation of EU policy – are responsible for informing SNA representatives of European developments which touch upon SNA powers. Moreover, the concerns of particular French SNAs regarding a particular European directive will often be represented by French bureaucrats in the Council working groups and the Commission consultative groups which determine the details of European directives.

Finally, European economic integration (and the Single European Market Programme in particular) has encouraged the relocation of governance in that it provides the principal logic behind the establishment and extension of transfrontier cooperation. Unsurprisingly, the bulk of interregional diplomatic efforts involves cross-border economic cooperation. The 1992 Single Market Programme encouraged a transformation of attitudes in numerous French cities, departments and regions, as SNAs sought to position themselves to take advantage of increased economic exchange.²⁶ Increasingly, they have perceived themselves as part of multinational regions and consequently seek to improve their links with SNAs in other countries.²⁷ As a response to economic integration, transfrontier regions created the Association of European Frontier Regions. More specifically, in 1991, five regions in France (Nord-Pas-de-Calais), Britain and Belgium created the Euro-region to take full advantage of the Single Market, the Channel Tunnel, and the northern segment of the TGV (the high speed French train network). Moreover, the relatively large amount of discretionary (non-committed) spending (approximately 50 per cent) provides French regions with the financial flexibility to improve cooperation with other subnational authorities.

Conclusion

It is important to note that the impact of Europeanization upon regional activity will vary from region to region. The manner in which governance is relocated and reformulated depends, in large part, upon

the ability of SNAs to take advantage of the new possibilities open to them. Some have been more successful in attracting European funds than others. The success of SNAs depends upon their economic situation and opportunities, the political leverage of local elites in encouraging central government to forward their dossiers rather than others, budgetary resources and technical expertise.²⁸ The state may have considerable input into how these funds are used. Nonetheless, the growth of EU funds has expanded the number and scope of regional programmes. France will receive substantially less funding in the 2000–2006 period and the state will compensate by increasing its own regional spending. However, while this suggests a reinforcement of state influence in SNA jurisdictions, the September 1999 reforms – and further proposed reforms – will transfer to SNAs control over the management of European funds.

To conclude, the creation and extension of the European structural funds, the development of other European legislation and policies, the creation of the CoR and the strengthening of the European Parliament, improved SNA representation in Brussels, and facilitated links to other European subnational authorities, have all affected French SNAs in a variety of ways. In terms of the framework applied here, most increased SNA activism due specifically to Europeanization must – limited as it is to lobbying and consultation – be classified in terms of the restructuring of policy networks at the European level. The relocation and reformulation of governance due to European integration has been relatively limited to date – at least in terms of overall policy-making – and much of this has been due to the impact of economic integration (increased transfrontier cooperation encouraged by CIs such as INTERREG). The provision of the bulk of structural fund expenditure has contributed to the reformulation of governance principally by reinforcing the coordinating and guiding roles of the state. The increased funds have enabled more, better and larger SNA programmes which have contributed to the profile and legitimacy of SNAs in the eyes of the public. Commission CIs have contributed to a limited relocation of governance, funding a sphere of autonomous activity for SNAs, notably in the context of INTERREG, although the amounts concerned have been relatively limited to date. Both ERP and the development of other European policies have increased SNA diplomacy. However, because of the organization of the European institutional framework and French law, SNAs are generally limited to attempts to influence policy from the outside. The development of EU legislation in areas previously devolved has resulted in the relocation of governance from

SNAs to the European legislative process, which does not allow them direct influence. The September 1999 reforms and proposed reforms regarding the transfer of the management of EU funds to SNAs are significant in that they increase the direct control of SNAs in the implementation of regional programmes. However, these authorities have only a limited margin of manoeuvre in the context of the programmes, given the state's consideration control over their formulation and given the projected decline in European funding over the forthcoming decade and the corresponding rise in the state's contribution.

The impact of Europeanization on state–subnational relations in France indicates a reverse development from the decentralization of the 1980s and the relocation of governance back towards the state, in so far that it alone can represent regional interests within EU governance. At the same time, the increasing 'economic and political reality of interregional co-operation and policy-making within the EU is increasingly at odds with the legal and constitutional basis of the Union, which remains based upon the nation-state'.²⁹ The domestic decentralization process has been the principal source of increased activism of French SNAs and the transformation of governance. As the weight of the French Jacobin tradition is great, the French state will likely prove more resistant than many of its European partners to pressures to decentralize further.

Notes

1. L.J. Sharpe (ed.), *The Rise of Meso Government in Europe* (London: Sage, 1993).
2. J. Anderson, 'Skeptical Reflections on a "Europe of Regions": Britain, Germany and the ERDF', *Journal of Public Policy* 10 (1990), 417–47; L. Hooghe, 'Subnational Mobilisation in the European Union', EUI working paper, RSC, no. 95/6 (Florence: EUI, 1995); L. Hooghe (ed.), *European Integration, Cohesion Policy and Subnational Mobilisation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); M. Keating and L. Hooghe, 'The Politics of European Community Regional Policy', paper presented to the Ninth International Conference of Europeanists, Chicago, Illinois, 31 March–2 April 1994; M. Keating and L. Hooghe, 'Bypassing the Nation-State? Regions and the EU Policy Process', in J. Richardson (ed.), *European Union, Power and Policy-Making* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 239–256; G. Marks, L. Hooghe and K. Blank, 'European Integration from the 1980s: State-Centric v. Multi-Level Governance', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34/3 (1996), 341–78.
3. J. Biancarelli, 'La communauté européenne et les collectivités locales: une double dialectique complexe', *Revue française d'administration publique*, 60 (1991), 515–28; S. Mazey, 'French Regions and the European Union', in

- S. Mazey and J. Loughlin (eds), *The End of the French Unitary State?* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), pp. 132–57; A. Moravcsik, 'Why the European Community Strengthens the State: Domestic Politics and International Co-operation', paper presented at the Ninth International Conference of Europeanists, Chicago, Illinois, 31 March–2 April, 1994.
4. C. Jeffery, 'Sub-National Mobilization and European Integration', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 38/1 (2000), 1–23.
 5. P. Le Galès and C. Lequesne (eds) *Regions in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1998); J. Loughlin, 'Europe of the Regions and the Federalisation of Europe', *Publius*, 26/4 (1997), 35–52.
 6. With regard to France, see A. Guyomarch, H. Machin and E. Ritchie, *France in the European Union*, Chapter 7, 'Territorial Policy' (London: Macmillan Press – now Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), pp. 189–213; R. Ladrech, 'Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: the Case of France', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32/1 (1994), 69–88; Mazey, 'French Regions and the European Union'; A. Smith, *L'Europe au miroir du local. Les fonds structurels en France, en Espagne et au Royaume Uni* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996).
 7. By governance is meant 'the imposition of overall direction or control on the allocation of valued resources. Governance is synthetic: it results from a mix of factors, including political leadership, state-society relations, institutional competition, electoral politics, and so on': J. Peterson, and E. Bomberg, *Decision-Making in the European Union* (London: Macmillan Press – now Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. 5. 'Multi-level governance', put simply, is governance that stretches both above the nation-state to the EU and below it to subnational authorities. See also L. Hooghe and G. Marks, 'Contending Models of Governance in the European Union', in A.W. Cafruny and C. Lankowki (eds), *Europe's Ambiguous Unity* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1997); G. Marks, 'Structural Policy in the European Community', in A.M. Sbragia, *Euro-Politics: Institutions and Policymaking in the 'New' European Community* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1992), pp. 191–224; G. Marks, 'An Actor-Centred Approach to Multilevel Governance', in C. Jeffery (ed.), *The Regional Dimension of the European Union* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp. 20–38.
 8. Peterson and Bomberg describe policy networks as 'a metaphor for a cluster of actors, each of which has an interest, or "stake", in a given EU policy sector and the capacity to help determine policy success or failure. EU policy networks usually bring together a diverse variety of institutional actors ... and other "stake-holders": private and public, national and supranational, political and administrative' (Peterson and Bomberg, *Decision-Making in the European Union*, p. 8).
 9. A. Smith and M. Smyrl, 'À la recherche d'interlocuteurs. La Commission Européenne et le développement territorial en France', *Sciences et Société* (1995), 79–98.
 10. A. Smith, 'The French Case: the Exception or the Rule?', in C. Jeffery, *The Regional Dimension of the European Union* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp. 117–130; A. Smith, 'Studying Multi-Level Governance. Examples from French Translations of the Structural Funds', *Public Administration*, 75/4, 711–29.

11. B. Dolez, 'Euro-girondins et gallo-jacobins', *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, 953 (1991), 23–9.
12. In the 1994–99 period, France received less structural funding than Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal; less on a per capita basis and in terms of percentage of national GDP than these five countries plus Ireland and Finland (1995–99). Nonetheless, this represented significant sums of money: 12.75 billion European Currency Units (ECUs)/euros in 1994 prices, rising only slightly in real terms for the 2000–2006 period (to 14.62 billion euro in 1999 prices). These amounts do not include Community Initiative (CI) and Innovation funding.
13. *Le Monde*, 10 September 1999.
14. I. Bache, *The Politics of European Union Regional Policy: Multi-Level Governance or Flexible Gatekeeping* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).
15. The total value of the IDOs rose from 5 per cent of the ERDF to 20 per cent in 1984. As early as 1978, the department of Lozère, in Languedoc-Roussillon, became one of the first European areas to profit from IDO funds.
16. R. Balme and B. Jouve, 'Building the Regional State: French Territorial Organization and the Implementation of the Structural Funds', in L. Hooghe and V. Wright (eds), *EC Cohesion Policy and Structural Funds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 75–93.
17. INTERREG areas in which French regions participate include notably the Atlantic Arc which brings together the maritime regions of France, the UK, Ireland, Spain and Portugal. INTERREG III, the programme in place for the years 2000–2006 involves 4.875 billion euros in funding, of which only 397 million (8 per cent) will go to France. It will finance three kinds of cooperation: transfrontier between contiguous SNAs of different countries; transnational between national and subnational authorities; and interregional on different issue areas between those regions suffering from backward development.
18. M. Pollock, 'Regional Actors in an Intergovernmental Play: the Making and Implementation of EC Structural Policy', in C. Rhodes and S. Mazey (eds), *The State of the European Union*, vol. 3 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), pp. 361–90.
19. *Le Monde*, 4 September 1999.
20. According to a civil servant formerly working in the local government division of the French Ministry of Interior (response to written questions, July 2001).
21. Guyomarch et al., *France in the European Union*.
22. E. Bomberg and J. Peterson, 'European Decision-Making: the Role of Sub-National Authorities', *Political Studies*, 46/2 (1998), 219–35.
23. These matters include cross-border cooperation; education; training and youth; economic and social cohesion, including the structural funds; trans-European transport networks and energy infrastructure networks; public health; culture; transport policy; EU enlargement; combating social exclusion; and the environment.
24. Forty-two of the 87 current French MEPs are also local government councillors (of which three are also National Assembly members), one is a National Assembly member and one a Senator; an additional four are local government bureaucrats. (Figures are taken from MEP descriptions

- in *Le Monde*, 15 June 1999.) Many more will have been active in the regional organizations of their parties.
25. R.H. Williams, *EU Spatial Policy and Planning* (London: Paul Chapman, 1996).
 26. P. Kresl, 'The Response of European Cities to EC 1992', *Journal of European Integration*, XV (1992), 11–72.
 27. R. Carmagni, P. Cheshire, J.-P. de Gaudmar, P. Hall, L. Rodwin and F. Snickars, 'Europe's Regional–Urban Futures', in Rodwin and Sazanami (eds), *Industrial Change and Regional Economic Transformation: the Experience of Western Europe* (London: HarperCollins Academic, 1991); Ladrech, op. cit.
 28. Guyomarch et al., *France in the European Union*.
 29. Mazey, 'French Regions and the European Union', p. 152.

Part Two

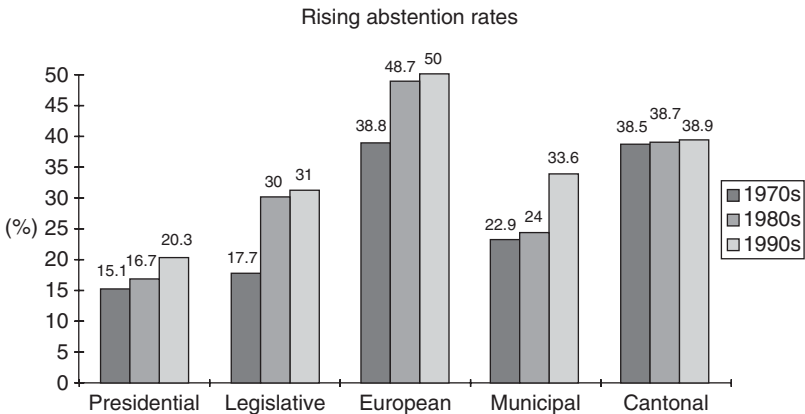
State and Society

6

Beyond the ‘Crisis of Representation’? A Case Study of Innovation in French Local Government

Sharon Collins

‘Political crisis’ is a term frequently used by political observers, politicians and the media to describe the state of politics in contemporary France. They point to indicators such as high abstention rates in elections, declining membership figures for political parties and trade unions and the results of opinion polls. These indicators paint a bleak picture of the state of French politics. Abstention rates, for example, have not ceased to rise since the 1970s and affect all types of elections (see Figure 6.1). Similarly, the number of spoilt ballot papers has continuously increased over recent elections.¹



Source: Figures from *Le Monde*, 15 June 1994, p. 34; Perrineau, ‘L’abstention du 13 juin’, p. 14 (see n. 1).

Figure 6.1 Abstention rates 1970s–1990s

Opinion polls show that dislike and distrust amongst the French population for political parties and politicians continue to grow. A poll carried out by *Sofres* in 1998, for example, indicates that a declining proportion of the population feels that it is represented by a political party (31 per cent in 1998 compared to 39 per cent in 1989); by a political leader (27 per cent in 1998, 35 per cent in 1989) or a union (16 per cent in 1998, 25 per cent in 1989).² In the same poll, 58 per cent of those questioned felt that politicians were not, or hardly at all, concerned with what people really thought (42 per cent in 1977) while 57 per cent considered politicians to be corrupt (38 per cent in 1977). In 1997, 61 per cent of those polled by *Sofres* felt distrust when they thought of politics (48 per cent in 1988) while 19 per cent felt disgust (8 per cent in 1988). 'Political crisis' is also a term recognized by the French population to describe the state of politics in France: 84 per cent of those polled by *Sofres* in 1998 recognized French politics to be in a state of crisis compared to 74 per cent ten years earlier. Responsibility for the crisis was attributed primarily to political parties and leaders, with 56 per cent of those polled blaming parties for their failure to resolve the problems affecting the country and 55 per cent blaming rivalries between politicians.³

Yet indicators also suggest that this political discontent has not translated into political apathy. In the 1998 poll cited above, 61 per cent of those polled considered politics to be an honourable activity, whilst 56 per cent considered it important to concern oneself with politics in order to be heard.⁴ Low electoral turnout in itself cannot be dismissed as passivity or a lack of 'civic' behaviour. A study of 'abstentionists' in the 1995 presidential and 1997 parliamentary elections argued that failure to vote can even be seen as a form of political expression.⁵ The authors of this study argued that, for a substantial section of the abstentionists, non-participation in the election represented a critical judgement on the government in office and the alternatives on offer. Similarly, an international study of public attitudes suggests that lack of trust in political institutions may be seen as a reaction of 'critical citizens'.⁶

Whilst traditional forms of political participation may be on the decline, the 1990s witnessed a rapid increase in non-traditional forms of political participation. For example, the number of voluntary associations increased rapidly: 60,000 were created in 1994 alone. The total number of associations quadrupled from the 1970s to the late 1990s, reaching an estimated 800,000 in 1999.⁷ In a 1997 survey, 43 per cent of those polled declared themselves to be a member of an association,

compared to 37 per cent in 1980.⁸ Demonstrations also grew more frequent, especially single-theme and small-scale protests, referred to as '*micromobilisations*'.⁹ It was estimated at the end of the 1990s that over 10,000 demonstrations took place every year in France.¹⁰ According to a survey carried out in 1990, 57 per cent of those polled declared that they had taken part in at least one extra-electoral political activity including protests, petitions and boycotts, compared to 15 per cent in 1959.¹¹ These indicators suggest that, despite the declining popularity of traditional political parties and structures, the French public remained highly politicized at the turn of the millennium. Many commentators attribute the increasing popularity of non-traditional forms of political activity to the failure of traditional political parties to respond to popular needs.¹²

More generally, representative democracy is considered by many to be inadequate to meet the needs of society in the twenty-first century.¹³ It is argued that representative democracy, in which the public role in the political process is limited to the simple act of ballot-box voting, encourages passive citizenship and isolates citizens from each other.¹⁴ Political parties, far from helping citizens to mobilize, suffer from the same problems as other state institutions, and their bureaucratization and centralization alienate them from citizens.¹⁵ Little wonder, then, that attention turned in the 1990s towards new ways of nurturing participative democracy. As an antidote to the centralization of politics, hope was placed in the decentralized structures at local level which might provide new opportunities for grassroots mobilization.

This chapter assesses the impact of attempts to create a new form of politics at local level in a communist-controlled city council in the 1990s. The case study of Nîmes in southern France is discussed in the context of debates about democracy and citizenship.

Reinventing citizenship: developing participative democracy

As Joël Roman has argued, the discourse of citizenship became prominent at the end of the twentieth century, as a kind of magic password which would allow policy-makers to find the solution to social exclusion, social cohesion and democratic deficit.¹⁶ Participative democracy, in which political power is shared between political representatives and citizens, was put forward as a means of bridging the democratic deficit. It would encourage 'active' citizenship rather than 'passive' citizenship associated with representative democracy, by enabling 'ordinary

people' and grassroots organizations to be involved in decision-making in all areas of life in which they have an active interest. Public participation in political decision-making would help to fill the existing gap between politics and society, returning to citizens the sovereignty which they had previously delegated to their elected representatives.¹⁷

The local level is seen as particularly propitious for several reasons. First, it is closer to the everyday life of citizens, and opinion polls consistently show a high level of identification with the commune, the smallest administrative unit. As a result, citizens display relatively strong attachment to the institution of the mayor, and turnout at municipal elections is generally high (almost as high as for presidential elections), although by March 2001 it had dropped to 67.3 per cent.¹⁸ Second, this proximity encourages participation in local affairs through the personnel of the council. As Sidney Tarrow has pointed out, it is not entirely fair to say that a country with 36,000 communes has low levels of political participation, since a significant proportion of the population is directly involved in running them.¹⁹ France has the highest number of local representatives in Europe: around 550,000, or one councillor for every hundred residents.²⁰ In a survey carried out six months before the municipal elections of March 2001, 22 per cent of French people declared themselves ready to stand as a candidate for election to the local council.²¹ Third, the local councils themselves through their actions promote voluntary associations through subsidies and involvement in projects. In those areas officially classed as disadvantaged, the state's urban regeneration programme stipulates community consultation as a condition of funding. Through this type of multi-agency local investment programme, the local council has become a major sponsor of voluntary associations.²²

Finally, electoral pressures and changing functions as a result of political decentralization have encouraged local councils to communicate directly with residents and think of new ways of consulting and involving them about their projects.²³ The small size of the commune means that direct democracy – referenda and other direct consultation practices – can be more easily carried out than at national level. In the 1980s, participative practices were developed mainly by left-wing councils,²⁴ but centre-right politicians followed suit in the 1990s. In order to maximize political resources and bolster legitimacy, municipal teams began to democratize their practices, developing consultation mechanisms and negotiating with local interest groups. The function of the local politician has changed from delegate to broker of interests.²⁵

The revitalization of local democracy had been one of the objectives of the socialists' decentralization laws of the early 1980s, and formed the basis of later reforms such as the 1992 law on the creation of interest-group-based consultative councils, and the 1995 law (this time presented by a right-wing government) giving residents the right to a referendum if supported by at least a fifth of registered voters. However, some commentators have expressed scepticism about the real extent of citizen involvement and empowerment. Albert Mabileau noted in 1991 that the decentralization laws had been too vague and therefore open to abuse, leading to local participation that was more 'mythical' than real. For example, local councils are not obliged to act upon the results of a local referendum (although the electoral consequences of ignoring local views might give pause for thought). Mabileau also argued that local democracy was further undermined by a 'culture of non-participation': local residents were in reality happy to leave decision-making to their elected representatives.²⁶ In a similar vein, Pierre Sadran warned of the risk that local consultation could develop into 'plebiscitary democracy', and noted that citizens allow themselves to be confined to 'consumerist and intermittent' uses of local democracy.²⁷ Clearly, much depends on the way local participation is sought and the use which is made of it by local decision-makers.

The present case study aims to examine one set of initiatives to encourage grassroots participation in its local context, in order to evaluate its success and the extent of its contribution to the democratization of political life.

Local democracy in action: a case study of Nîmes

The following section concentrates on experiments in local democracy at the end of the 1990s in one city, Nîmes (population 342,000), situated in the southern region of Languedoc-Roussillon. Nîmes was historically a left-wing city but spent most of the 1980s – the period of left government at national level – and the 1990s under a local council controlled by the right. Having been in power since 1983, the right-wing municipal administration under the leadership of Jean Bousquet lost the city hall in 1995 to a Union of the Left team whose election campaign had been based on a promise to involve the public in local decision-making, described as '*une gestion associée*' (associated management).²⁸

During the 1995 election campaign, the Union of the Left team stressed its desire to develop an innovative management style in

contrast to the practice of the previous right-wing municipality, whom it accused of having cut links with all voluntary organizations, neighbourhood associations and committees, trade unions and even the local chamber of commerce.²⁹ According to the Communist Party (PCF)'s campaign literature, it was important not to 'replace the caliph with a vizir'; there had to be a complete break with the right's practices.³⁰ The incumbent mayor was widely portrayed as a 'boss', dictating his decisions even to his own colleagues and fellow party members.³¹ A member of Bousquet's own team later admitted publicly that the mayor did not tolerate disagreement and had excluded his colleagues from discussion.³²

Bousquet's methods provided a negative template for the new left-wing administration: projects had been developed and finalized before being presented to the public, resulting in outcry at unpopular decisions. One example given was that of the right-wing municipality's plan to uproot trees on a major thoroughfare in order to widen the road. Work was about to go ahead when the municipality was faced with a large-scale public protest and had to abandon the project. In contrast, the present left-wing municipality declared that its intention was take public opinion into consideration during the initial stages of project development.

Consequently, in the preparation of the 1995 municipal programme, numerous public meetings were held and, for the first time ever in Nîmes, a series of questionnaires was administered. The main questionnaire, entitled '*Nîmois, Quelle ville voulez-vous?*' covered a wide range of topics including economic development; employment; town planning; municipal management; the voluntary sector; local democracy; urban regeneration; services for children; the aged; the handicapped; health; schools; training; sport and culture. There was a separate questionnaire for young people which covered subjects such as unemployment, drugs, training, housing, schools, music, racism, AIDS, sport and transport. The resulting municipal programme comprised 150 proposals suggested by the public, with priority given to democracy and citizenship. The new council argued that:

The men and women of Nîmes long to have their say, a right they have been denied for the last twelve years. They want to be fully and clearly informed. They want to be free to give their point of view, to be listened to and heard. They want to be consulted about the council's projects and works, to be involved with their implementation, and to make a real contribution to their management.

This desire for a modern, effective form of citizenship is legitimate; it is in tune with the times we live in. We want to respond to it in concrete terms by encouraging new forms of municipal democracy and helping residents to take responsibility themselves.³³

In the council's magazine *'Nîmes La Ville'*, distributed free to residents, the new Communist mayor Alain Clary attempted to define the concept of 'associated management': proposals from the council would have no chance of success unless local citizens monitored them closely and intervened actively through their associations, trade unions and neighbourhood committees. This, according to Clary, was what people wanted, not just in Nîmes but throughout France.³⁴

The following year was declared the 'year of citizenship' in Nîmes, and the mayor issued an invitation to residents to 'intervene openly and actively, alongside your elected representatives'.³⁵ The municipal team introduced a variety of initiatives to develop links between the elected councillors and the general public. In particular, the council made extensive use of questionnaires in order to gauge opinion. Questionnaires were routinely used to seek feedback on the effectiveness of the council's information to residents. As a result of responses to a questionnaire distributed in October 1995, the content and layout of the municipal magazine was modified, to the apparent satisfaction of local readers.

More significantly, the local council instituted an annual public consultation exercise on its running of municipal affairs, with a view to determining priorities for the budget before its adoption. On average, the municipality received around 4000 completed questionnaires every year, containing more than 10,000 proposals and suggestions, which the council put forward as evidence of the public's wish to be involved in decision-making.³⁶ The aim of the consultation was to ensure that budgetary priorities reflected public demand. Thus, as a result of the 1997 public consultation, which highlighted huge dissatisfaction with the state of road maintenance, the municipality increased the budgetary provisions for this sector by 40 per cent in the 1998 municipal budget.³⁷

As well as promoting consultation, the council also prioritized transparency and access to information within the city, especially in relation to the budget. One of the first actions of the incoming administration was to commission a financial audit by an independent financial team. The audit, which was presented publicly and available for any resident to consult, made it clear that Nîmes was in debt to the

tune of 14,716 francs per inhabitant. This information served a political purpose, since it further discredited the previous administration and also established the financial limits on the new council's plans, but it did set a precedent for financial openness and probity. The municipal magazine published monthly financial statements thereafter.³⁸

The council also took care to work with local associations and other community bodies, setting up consultative mechanisms in order to formalize the process. Within the first two years of its mandate, it had created an array of consultative committees in all sectors of the council's activity. In the cultural sector for example, in 1995 the municipality of Nîmes created five extra-municipal committees for culture which consisted of representatives of cultural associations. It also established a local cultural council (*Conseil Culturel Communal*, or CCC), with members designated by the extra-municipal committees and municipal councillors (from the majority and the opposition). The purpose of these consultative bodies and the CCC was to enable all parties concerned with culture to be involved in the development of policy.³⁹

One of the largest projects undertaken within the first year of the Union of the Left's mandate involved re-establishing links with the 43 residents' committees (*comités de quartier*) present in the town. In February 1996 a Centre for the Promotion of Associational and Neighbourhood Life (*Centre de Promotion de la Vie Associative et des Quartiers* or CEPROVAQ) was created. Headed by three members of the municipal team, CEPROVAQ had the task of coordinating communication between the city council and the residents of Nîmes (via residents' committees and voluntary associations) and providing a support system for local associations in the form of information, technical support, logistics and finance. The Centre convened regular meetings between the residents' committees and councillors and planners on questions relating to urban management (traffic, road maintenance, lighting, security, town planning and the environment). It also organized visits by council committee members and experts to each of the local districts in order to listen to residents' demands and complaints. According to local councillor Danièle Jacquet-Lesur, such visits provided an invaluable means of matching policies to local needs.⁴⁰ In addition, the Centre had a particular role to play in coordinating the action of different administrative levels (state, department and city) in the implementation of urban regeneration contracts aimed at improving deprived areas of the city (*Contrat de Ville*). Overall, councillors expressed the view that CEPROVAQ had helped to build up a dialogue between residents' representatives and the municipal team.⁴¹

The council made a special effort to involve young people, and in December 1996 set up a Young People's City Council (*Conseil municipal des jeunes* or CMJ). Whilst not a new idea – as far back as 1979 the town of Schiltigheim, near Strasbourg, had created a children's city council – plans to set up youth municipal councils became increasingly popular amongst French municipalities during the 1990s.⁴² The aim of these councils is to encourage younger generations to participate in town life, a form of 'apprenticeship in citizenship'.⁴³ According to the city council, young people were interested in local affairs but had been prevented from active involvement because previous decision-makers had not wanted to listen to them. The CMJ was intended to provide them with a voice. Membership of the youth council was open to all schoolchildren (aged between 13 and 16 years) who put themselves forward for election. There are currently 55 youth councillors serving two-year mandates.

Once elected, the youth councillors sat on committees corresponding to those of the official city council and made proposals which were then presented to one of the CMJ's quarterly full sessions. Following approval, the proposal went before the city council, and in practice almost all proposals from the CMJ were adopted by the senior council. For the young councillors involved in local decision-making in this way, the experience appears to have been very positive and succeeded in stimulating their interest in local politics.⁴⁴ Examples of some of the projects launched by the first youth council include the introduction of a free discount card for secondary-school pupils offering reductions in certain cinemas and shops; a new programme for young people on Fun Radio every Wednesday afternoon; free entry into the town's museums and football matches for all schoolchildren; the creation of a skate park; the introduction of a non-alcoholic bar for young people in the council's Youth Service (*Service jeunesse*) building; improved security in parks and on buses; and the launch of an annual two-day cultural event to showcase young people's artistic talents. The CMJ also organized the collection and delivery of more than 40 kilos of books to Damé, on the Ivory Coast, a town twinned with Nîmes.

Overall, municipal management underwent a significant transformation in Nîmes at the end of the 1990s. As a result of increased consultation with a sizeable array of new bodies, decision-making was undoubtedly slowed down. In 1998, an article published in *Le Monde* described the changes and concluded that the power structure had swung 'from one extreme to the other': from the pyramidal power structure under RPR mayor Bousquet to horizontal structures.⁴⁵

According to one city hall employee cited in the article, the need to secure majority agreement for decisions, instead of the will of one man, effectively immobilized the council. However, the left council maintained that despite the delays consultative management still brought about greater efficiency because problems of implementation were avoided.⁴⁶

The experiment ended in defeat for the left council. At the local elections of March 2001, the left council was voted out and replaced with a right-wing team. The left's decisive defeat – attributed by journalists to the right's ability to form a united front (even including the far right, according to the defeated mayor Alain Clary) – threw into question the practice of participative democracy. Whilst the election results must also be interpreted in the light of national politics, the local RPR victor Jean-Paul Fournier had been able to exploit the feeling of immobilism (the impression that no concrete initiatives had emerged from the left's consultative process) especially in the deprived areas which traditionally constituted the backbone of the PCF's electoral support.⁴⁷ Participative democratic experiments have shown that citizen consultation invariably increases the public's expectations of action. If the council is seen to be failing to deliver action – as witnessed in the case of Nîmes – then these expectations can only result in disillusionment. In other words, words are not enough.

Conclusion

The Nîmes experiment highlighted the difficulties of participative democracy in an electoral climate where results matter. In particular, the left parties – most notably the PCF – have been challenged by a new consumerist trend among voters which undermines their traditional role as channels of popular discontent. Decentralization has also placed new, often contradictory pressures on the mayor, who as well as representative and mouthpiece must also be an expert manager in a range of complex technical areas. Nevertheless, the long-term trend seems to be towards more public consultation, and it is noteworthy that right-wing municipal teams succeeding left-wing councils often retain many of the consultative structures they inherit (as in Saint-Etienne, for example).

In terms of developing democracy and citizenship, French municipalities have been experimenting with new forms of public participation for a number of years. As President Jacques Chirac acknowledged, some of the lessons of local government – particularly the capacity to

innovate and experiment – might usefully be applied to national politics.⁴⁸ However, the risks of failure, as seen in the Nîmes case, are likely to discourage national politicians and parties.

Elsewhere in Europe, other countries are also developing local democracy. In Great Britain, the New Labour government has introduced new statutory obligations for local councils to consult local populations. There are also signs that devolution in Scotland and Wales has opened up the political debate and allowed some new actors into the decision-making process. Some commentators have expressed doubts about the extent to which this new approach heralds a 're-invention' of government, as central government in the UK remains very much in the driving seat. Nevertheless, there are signs that a significant change is taking place, 'from a perspective which sees local government as a vehicle for providing a range of important public services to a new emphasis on community governance'.⁴⁹ Although the search for new ways of doing politics and finding better ways of delivering basic services is a lengthy and difficult one, local experiments such as that in Nîmes are part of a longer-term trend which involves renegotiation of the basic contract between government and citizens.

Notes

1. P. Perrineau, 'L'abstention du 13 juin démontre l'ampleur du malaise démocratique', *Le Monde*, 1 July 1999, 14.
2. Cited in G. Mermet, *Francoscopie: Comment vivent les Français* (Paris: Larousse, 1999), p. 222.
3. O. Duhamel and P. Méchet, *L'état de l'opinion* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1999), pp. 268–9.
4. Cited in Perrineau, 'L'abstention du 13 juin', 14.
5. J. Jaffré and A. Muxel, 'S'abstenir: hors du jeu ou dans le jeu politique?', in P. Bréchon, A. Laurent and P. Perrineau (eds), *Les cultures politiques des Français* (Paris: Presses des Sciences Po, 2000), pp. 19–52.
6. P. Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens. Global Support for Democratic Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
7. J. Bastide, 'La vie associative ou l'engagement au service de la cité', *Hommes et migrations*, 1206 (1999), 50.
8. Mermet, *Francoscopie*, p. 206.
9. O. Fillieule, 'La manifestation de rue comme affirmation publique d'un engagement citoyen', *Le Monde*, 1 July 1999, 14.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
11. S. Tolotti, 'La nouvelle vague', *Croissance*, 407 (1997), 43.
12. Perrineau, 'L'abstention du 13 juin', 14.
13. See, for example, P. Herzog et al., *Quelle démocratie, quelle citoyenneté?* (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier/Editions Ouvrières, 1995); P. Herzog, *Reconstruire un pouvoir politique* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1997); A.

- Cordeiro, 'Pratiques associatives, pratiques citoyennes', *Hommes et migrations*, 1196 (1996), 20.
14. Bastide, 'La vie associative', 49. Note that the French term for a polling booth ('l'isoloir') emphasizes this isolating effect.
 15. P. Herzog, 'Pour une démocratie participative', in Herzog et al., *Quelle démocratie, quelle citoyenneté?*, p. 26. See also J. Roman, 'Une société citoyenne' in the same volume, p. 61.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
 17. Cordeiro, 'Pratiques associatives', p. 20. See also Roman, 'Une société citoyenne', pp. 79–80.
 18. Figure is for the first round. See H. Bilger-Street and S. Milner, 'The municipal elections of March 2001', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 9/4 (2001), 507–22.
 19. S. Tarrow, *Between Center and Periphery, Grassroots Politicians in Italy and France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).
 20. P. Sadran, 'La démocratie locale', *Les Cahiers Français* ('Collectivités locales en France') (1996), 115–18.
 21. Ipsos/*Le Courrier des Maires*, 'Le moral des maires à six mois des élections municipales' (October 2000), p. 21.
 22. J.-C. Sandrier, 'Associations et politique de la ville', Rapport au Premier Ministre (11 June 2001).
 23. *Le Monde*, 2 June 1999.
 24. See M. Schain, *French Communism and Local Power* (London: Frances Pinter, 1985).
 25. See A. Mabileau, 'Les élites politiques locales', *Les Cahiers Français* ('Collectivités locales en France') (1996), 119–22.
 26. A. Mabileau, *Le système local en France* (Paris: Montchrestien, 1991), pp. 130–1.
 27. Sadran, 'La démocratie locale', 117.
 28. The Union of the Left team comprised 13 Communists, 13 Socialists, 4 *Radicaux de Gauche*, 3 *Génération Ecologie*, 1 *Alternatif Rouge et Vert* (AREV) and 4 'citizens of Nîmes'.
 29. P. Belmonte, 'Nîmes: Les citoyens font la cité. L'espoir renaît', *L'Elu d'aujourd'hui*, 200 (1996), 42.
 30. Parti communiste français, 'Sur la préparation des élections municipales' (election campaign leaflet, 1995).
 31. In an interview in October 1997, the ecologist deputy-mayor Joseph Alcon described the former mayor as a 'boss' who made his decisions alone.
 32. *Le Monde*, 4 July 1998 (interview with Jean-Paul Fournier, RPR departmental and regional councillor and former *maire-adjoint* in the Bousquet municipality).
 33. 'Les Nîmoises et les Nîmois aspirent à reprendre la parole, droit dont ils sont privés depuis 12 ans. Ils veulent être clairement et pleinement informés. Ils souhaitent donner librement leur point de vue, être écoutés et entendus. Ils désirent être consultés sur les projets et les réalisations, être associés à leur mise en œuvre et contribuer effectivement à la gestion. Cette volonté citoyenne moderne, efficace, est légitime: elle correspond à notre époque. Nous voulons y répondre concrètement en impulsant de nouvelles formes de démocratie communale et en favorisant la prise de responsabilité des

- habitants.' Letter written by mayor Alain Clary to the public of Nîmes, dated 11 April 1995.
34. A. Clary, 'Une gestion associée', *La Ville: Nîmes journal municipal d'informations*, 25 (1995), 3.
 35. A. Clary, 'Je voudrais que 1996 soit l'année du développement à la Nîmoise', *La Ville: Nîmes journal municipal d'informations*, 30 (1996), 3.
 36. C. Bernie-Boissard, 'Budget 1996: Consultation des Nîmois' (municipal document).
 37. 'Equiper la ville et préparer l'avenir', *La Ville: Nîmes journal municipal d'informations*, 53 (1998), 5.
 38. Described by one of the principal bankers in Nîmes in an article in *Le Monde* as having 'among the most modern management there is', after three years the Union of the Left team succeeded in reducing the city's debt and regaining the ability to self-finance (for the first time since 1991), and, after freezing local tax rates at the level set by Bousquet in 1994, in 1999 the municipality reduced tax rates for the first time in decades. See *Le Monde*, 4 June 1998; 'Budget 1999: Le débat est lancé', *La Ville: Nîmes journal municipal d'informations*, 61 (1999), 4.
 39. 'Conseil Culturel Communal', règlement intérieur (official statutes).
 40. Cited in 'Démocratie locale: Une élue de terrain', *La Ville: Nîmes journal municipal d'informations*, 31 (1996), 12.
 41. Interview with municipal councillor, Janie Arneguy (October 1997).
 42. F. Aizicovici, 'Les conseils municipaux d'enfants jouent à saute-frontières', *Le Monde économie*, 19 January 1999.
 43. Phrase used by the municipality of Nîmes to describe the CMJ: see A. Gil, 'Les jeunes conseillers municipaux dressent leur bilan', *La Ville: Nîmes journal municipal d'informations*, January 1998, 8.
 44. A. Gil, 'Le Conseil municipal jeune passe la main', *La Ville: Nîmes journal municipal d'informations*, 48 (1998), 9.
 45. R. Benguigui, 'Nîmes: les surprises d'un tandem de gauche', *Le Monde*, 4 June 1998, 11.
 46. Interview with Joseph Alcon (ecologist assistant-mayor), 29 October 1997.
 47. See C. Belmont, 'Nîmes: la fin de l'expérience communiste', *Le Figaro*, 20 March 2001, 8.
 48. Jacques Chirac cited in P. Robert-Diard, 'M. Chirac déplore le décalage entre la vie politique et "ce qui se passe réellement dans notre société"', *Le Monde*, 7 July 1999, 8.
 49. R. Hambleton, 'Comparative City Management: Themes and Issues', unpublished ESRC research paper, Workshop on Urban Governance (Bristol, 25–26 September 2000), 2.

7

Education for Citizenship: Reinventing the French Republic

Hugh Starkey

At the turn of the twenty-first century the question of violence in schools was a major preoccupation of the French government. A sense of crisis in education was fuelled in the 1999/2000 school year by teachers' strikes and the publication of a number of books, which rapidly became best-sellers, containing lurid eye-witness accounts of daily life in France's schools.¹ The school is one of the central institutions of the French Republic and violence directed against the school is, as well as a symptom of crisis, a direct attack on the state by its youngest citizens who are also its future. Hence the gravity of the situation and the importance of finding appropriate responses. In January 2000, the Ministry of Education responded to growing concern from teachers' unions, parents and the public by announcing the second phase of an action plan against violence in schools. However, this was insufficient to stem the tide of criticism and the minister, Claude Allègre, was forced to resign shortly afterwards.

All proposals for reducing school violence and restoring confidence in the Republic, whether from the minister or from opposition spokespersons or independent commentators, include in their recipe an improved education for citizenship. However, improving education for citizenship requires substantial changes to schools as institutions. A study of the theory and practice of education for citizenship thus reveals much about the renewal not only of state schools (*l'école de la République*), but also of the Republic itself. Education for citizenship is intended to promote the future health of democracy in France, taking into account a diverse and multicultural society. It also demonstrates a greatly enhanced sense of local and community autonomy and initiative within a framework of clearly defined republican principles. In addition, it reveals the importance

of teamwork and ‘joined-up’ thinking across institutional boundaries, the notion of *partenariat*.

This chapter briefly examines the evidence on violence in schools. It looks at the claims made for education for citizenship as a response and at the way this education has evolved in conception and in practice. It notes the change of emphasis from uniformity of provision to diversity of provision to achieve greater equality of outcomes. Jacobin centralism has given way to an understanding of the need to adapt to local circumstances. Similarly, schools are asked to become sensitive to the needs of individual pupils. The chapter highlights the ‘racialization’ (*ethnisation*) of the discourse of violence and school failure, which indicates a gap between the republican ideals of equality and the perceived reality in schools. This gap is also noticeable in the conception of citizenship education itself.

A transformation of the whole education system is in process, designed amongst other things to achieve inclusive citizenship and realize the vision of a democratic multi-ethnic France in the twenty-first century. However, there is widespread resistance to this change, often anchored in a universalist interpretation of the Republic which fails to acknowledge that the public sphere and the private sphere are no longer, if they ever were, discrete, watertight concepts. Education for citizenship cannot be effective in outmoded institutions. This chapter puts forward the argument that republican schools need therefore to be based not just on the transmission of a culturally hegemonic body of knowledge, but on a recognition of and respect for the varied communities in which their pupils live. That in itself would constitute something of a revolution.

Violence and schools: a developing political issue

From the early 1990s successive French ministers of education became increasingly preoccupied with the question of violence in schools, as witnessed by the number of reports commissioned by the ministry: the Barret Report (1993), which categorized types of violence in schools; the Braunstein-Dasté Report (1994), which focused on the most difficult schools; and the Fotinos Report (1995), which noted the lack of objective data and the need to improve the training of teachers to equip them to deal with violence.² In March 1995 the then education minister, François Bayrou, launched the first official campaign against school violence. Policy was subsequently helpfully informed by the publication of a careful evaluation of the situation by sociologist Éric

Debarbieux³ and a collection of research papers including a comparative dimension.⁴

Following the change of government in 1997, the new minister, Allègre, announced measures against school violence to take effect from January 1998. An evaluation of this plan was completed in time to inform the second phase which was announced at a press conference on 27 January 2000. Figures for the school year 1998/99, quoted in the press briefing, included a total of 720,000 reported incidents of violence, nearly two-thirds of which were directed at property rather than persons. There were 1000 serious incidents of violence against people: 780 of the victims were pupils and 200 were adults working in schools including teachers. The perpetrators of the violence were almost exclusively pupils (86 per cent) and, particularly in the case of upper secondary schools (*lycées*), former pupils. Ministry figures for the previous school year showed that vandalism, counted as violent action against property, is most common in *lycées*.

To put the figures into perspective, only 2.6 per cent of all incidents were considered serious, that is, referred to the public prosecutor. Of these serious incidents, 71 per cent were verbal threats, 22 per cent involved physical aggression. Only 2 per cent involved an offensive weapon; 1.6 per cent of cases involved sexual assault and 3.3 per cent extortion (*racket*). Overall 17 per cent of secondary schools report one serious incident a term and 6 per cent report two such incidents. Violence is thus concentrated in relatively few schools. Considered from a health and safety perspective, schools are far more dangerous for pupils than for staff, since pupil-on-pupil violence accounts for 80 per cent of incidents.

However, research suggests that in schools already perceived to be violent, the perception of violence in school by both pupils and staff sharply increases. Just as individuals have different levels of tolerance to background levels of noise, so with violence.⁵ However, between 1995 and 1998 the percentage of pupils noting high levels of violence in their schools rose from 24 per cent to 41 per cent, and for teachers the rise was spectacular, from 7 per cent to 49 per cent. It would appear that in some schools, nearly half the pupils and their teachers feel insecure. Indeed, 20 per cent of pupils no longer have confidence in the school as an effective institution.

Some of the concern for violence in schools may be orchestrated by other political agendas such as those of the teacher unions. The sociologist Michel Wieviorka concluded that the well-publicized teachers' strike for protection from violence in the Seine-Saint-Denis department

in 1998 was based on political rather than practical concerns.⁶ He also noted that French schools are structured so that teachers are not responsible for discipline and can exclude pupils from their classes if they are disruptive. In other words, the pastoral side of the school (*vie scolaire*) scarcely engages with the academic side. This has significant repercussions for citizenship education.

The Allègre action plan of 1998 concentrated on 411 secondary schools and their feeder primary schools in the six most affected local authorities (*académies*): Aix-Marseille, Amiens, Créteil, Lille, Lyon and Versailles. These were provided with a substantial injection of (unqualified) teaching assistants (*aides-éducateurs*) and a few hundred medical and social work posts were also created. The teaching assistants often come from families of North African or West African origin. They are not teachers and have low status within schools, their role tending to be defined by what they are not allowed to do. They are often expected to help control 'ethnic minority pupils'. In other words, they are part of a (racialized) system of control, rather than an expression of the value of diversity of cultures in schools.⁷

The main focus of the action plan was a tightening of procedures, including guidance for heads on responses to different forms of violence. It also emphasized team and inter-agency work.⁸ For example, the plan included measures to integrate the *aides-éducateurs* with both the teaching and pastoral dimensions. In addition, schools are expected to work with other agencies such as the police, prosecution services, social services and health. Early results from the experiment showed a reduction of violence in the trial areas and an improved climate within the schools. Elsewhere, violent incidents remained at the same level.

Citizenship education and the Republic

The January 2000 measures built on those already announced in the first 1998 action plan, which had strongly emphasized the importance of education for citizenship. At a press conference to launch the 2000 plan, Allègre claimed that:

the strengthening and coherent application of education for citizenship throughout schooling (from nursery education to upper secondary school) has enabled us to begin to help young people develop a feeling for the values and rules associated with living together as a society and for their responsibilities as future citizens.⁹

It is certainly the case that one of the roles of citizenship education is, as ever, socialization. The official guidance on citizenship education makes some interesting distinctions about the elements of citizenship education:

The education of the citizen includes three elements: an education for civility; an education for life in society; and civic education in its political sense by which we mean an introduction to forms of political life, to institutions and to the ways they operate. The Republic is founded on a Constitution but it demands reciprocally, civic virtue.¹⁰

In other words, citizenship education in France is firmly rooted in the notion that the democratically agreed constitution is the basis of a permanent political settlement to which all citizens are expected to adhere (civic virtue). This requires citizens to understand the political and institutional basis of the settlement (civic education), and that they practise acceptable forms of behaviour towards their fellow citizens (civility). This is the basis for their participation in society.

However, as Alain Touraine points out, schools are not neutral. He argues that inequalities at the age of fifteen are produced by the education system itself. Therefore, since schools are active agents, action to reduce inequalities can be taken within schools.¹¹ A curriculum which fails to recognize cultural diversity is likely to be one of those factors that alienates many pupils and leads them to reject the very basis of the institution that is failing them. Citizenship education, which is specifically aimed to inform about republican values and human rights, is a principal site for critical examination. Does the school as an institution live up to the values it proclaims? If it is failing to provide equality of outcome, it would appear that the answer is no.

Citizenship education has traditionally been high on the political agenda in France, having its roots in the need to consolidate national support for the Third Republic when democracy was restored in 1871. Citizenship education from its origins has always been intended to help integrate a diverse population into a single national culture defined as republican, in other words based on the principles of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* and on human rights. Its basis is the conviction that the school is responsible for transmitting the basic values of the state: the universal, liberal values that make it possible for people with different beliefs nonetheless to live together in a single political entity. Family values, particularly religious observance and beliefs, must, in

this view, be relativized by reference to overarching public values of respect and tolerance for diversity.

In this view, the school is the Republic's primary institution for socializing its citizens. Through its curriculum, the school is entrusted with the mission of defining what it means to be a citizen and of ensuring that there is a common understanding of the rights and obligations of citizenship. One of the last actions of the outgoing Bayrou ministry in 1997 was to issue a circular redefining the mission of secondary teachers to include explicitly the task of transmitting republican values and developing pupils as citizens.¹² Similarly, the official decree of 29 May 1996 by which the Juppé government reformed secondary schools makes a clear link between citizenship education and the overall aims of schooling. The aims of secondary education include the following:

Building on education for responsibility, their general education should enable all pupils to acquire the *guidelines they need to exercise their citizenship* and choose appropriate options which will enable them to fit in with the culture and society about them as well as finding their place in the world of work. (Emphasis added)¹³

This presents a static, perhaps assimilationist, view of French society into which pupils have to fit. A dynamic view would also suggest opportunities to help shape society. The basis of state education in France has, however, long been initiation into a common culture through a single curriculum. It has not recognized difference, but rather started from the premise that, within the Republic, all citizens are entitled to equal treatment. However, as Touraine points out in the article cited above, providing an undifferentiated (equal) curriculum and equal resources to a diverse group of pupils with differing needs is likely to result in considerable inequalities of outcome. Instead, it is necessary to devote more time to the less favoured pupils.

There is much resistance to such notions of republican pluralism. The view of successive French governments has been based on the premise that there is a danger of society fragmenting into ghettos of ethnic minority or religious communities, referred to as *communautés*. Such a tendency, it is felt, would undermine the basis of the French state which is to integrate all citizens into a single Republic founded on common universal values, namely human rights and the rule of law. However, this very rigid distinction between the public sphere and the private sphere is beginning to break down under the pressure of social

tensions, of which violence in schools is a symptom. Evidence for this can be found in the changes within the way education for citizenship is formulated and delivered.

As the mayor of Quimper, Bernard Poignant, put it in the context of regional languages: 'In creating the French nation, the Jacobins were historically useful; to avoid its disintegration, the Girondins are now essential.'¹⁴ Recent instructions to schools have allowed greater expression of local and regional and other cultural identities. For instance, the ministerial circular issued in January 1999 giving guidelines for preparing the 1999/2000 school year stressed the sphere of independent action given to schools in preparing their plan (the *projet d'établissement* or *projet d'école*).¹⁵ Within the national curriculum, considerable flexibility is now available to heads to accommodate the particular needs of their pupils. This can include specific regional factors like local languages (such as Catalan or Breton) or needs related to the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of pupils and their parents. The 1999 circular justifies a differential treatment of schools and pupils in the name of the republican principle of equality: 'giving more to those who require more'. The *mammouth* to which Allègre often referred (the centralized education bureaucracy) is beginning to evolve into a different kind of creature.

The renewal of citizenship education

The venerable 'civic and moral teaching' (*instruction civique et morale*), dating from the nineteenth century, was replaced with 'civic education' (*éducation civique*) in the 1976 Haby reform of the lower secondary school (*collège unique*), initiated by prime minister Chirac. However, it had no timetabled lessons and therefore disappeared from view.¹⁶ From 1981 the new socialist government worked to reformulate civic education with an explicit underpinning of human rights education.¹⁷ Detailed official instructions, syllabuses and timetable allocations were published by ministerial decrees in 1985. The syllabus was gradually introduced to successive year groups, reaching the secondary school in 1990.

The New Contract for Schools (*Nouveau Contrat pour l'École*), launched in 1994, required new programmes of study for the whole of compulsory schooling which were published in 1995 and 1996 and these in turn have been gradually implemented. The programmes of study specify their nature and purpose, namely to provide 'education for human rights and citizenship through learning about the principles

and values which underpin and frame democracy and the Republic'.¹⁸ The context of this reform during the Bayrou ministry (1993–97) was a concern that schools were no longer working as institutions, that violence and disorder were becoming endemic and that a new emphasis needed to be placed on whole-school policies with clear objectives. A working party, the *Groupe Technique Disciplinaire, éducation civique* started developing new guidelines and a new syllabus for the lower secondary school in 1991 and these were published in 1996. The conclusions of the working party received cross-party political support and the new syllabus was introduced to year 7 (*6e*) in September 1996. It reached the final class of the lower secondary school in September 1999. The 1998 Allègre reform of the upper secondary school (*lycée*) also introduced citizenship education at this level which was implemented from November 1999.

The timetabling for citizenship education gives scope for local initiative. In both primary and secondary schools, between thirty minutes and one hour per week is allocated to civic education. In secondary schools this is usually taught by teachers of history and geography and guidance for teachers comes in a single volume covering history, geography and citizenship. The expectation is that much of the teaching will be in weekly classes, but schools can also deliver up to half the syllabus in longer blocks of time. This provides the opportunity for visits, project work or conferences tailored to suit the needs and interests of pupils. From 2000, a formal examination of citizenship was introduced as part of the national examinations (*le brevet*) at the end of lower secondary school, in order to address concern about the low status of citizenship education.

In terms of syllabus, the programme of study for the four years of lower secondary school is progressive in that the basic concepts of citizenship are explored in different contexts, moving from the near and the concrete to the general and the abstract (see Appendix 7.1). The programme of study for the first year of secondary school (*6e*) contrasts the notion of individual (private sphere) with that of citizen (public sphere). The programme starts by a consideration of what education is for and the school as a learning community. The local focus switches to the global with an introduction to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is then applied to a school context. In the summer term, pupils study the environment, including respect for property and the notion of heritage (*patrimoine*).

The programme of study for the following year (*5e*) is based on two of the fundamental republican principles, equality and solidarity, and

their application to daily life. There is a half-term module on understanding and combating discrimination, linked to official encouragement to participate in a national week against racism. Solidarity is seen as, on the one hand humanitarian assistance and on the other, social security. Next (4e) pupils go on to consider freedoms, rights and justice. Finally, the programme of study for the last year of lower secondary education (3e) examines the right to strike, and political activity including demonstrations.

The programmes suggest that in the twenty-first century citizens may have a different relationship to the nation-state. Moreover, the syllabus relating to rights and justice takes care to show that rights of one group within society may be in conflict with those of other groups. But such attention to diversity and problematization of state-citizen relations sits uneasily alongside a strongly nation-centred view of identity. French identity is presented as an unproblematic ideal, based on a constitution, nationality, heritage and commitment to democracy. Indeed, there is a considerable emphasis on how to acquire French nationality for those who do not already possess it. Human rights are not dependent on nationality and nor is the notion of citizenship in the sense of active participation in the community where one lives. However, the programme of study links citizenship and nationality, thus effectively denying the possibility of full citizenship within France for those not possessing French nationality. This may be construed by some young people as devaluing themselves or their parents.

The ‘racialization’ of discourse on violence and educational failure

In an interview published in early 1999, the chair of the drafting committee for the non-statutory guidance for citizenship education expressed concern that the programme was having too little effect. She argued that policies for helping to integrate ethnic minority groups have poured money into sports facilities, provision of extra staff and the renovation of schools but neglected citizenship education: ‘we may have failed to put in place the most important thing, namely a pedagogy for democratic citizenship and Republican neutrality (*laïcité*). And now we are having to live with the consequences: rioting in the city suburbs (*banlieues*).’¹⁹

Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux’s statement is interesting because, like many accounts of France’s social problems, it explicitly links violence in the run-down city suburbs to ethnic minorities. This appears to

confirm the emergence of widespread discourse on violence in schools which is racialized, that is, marked by 'the belief that school violence is linked to the "ethnic" composition of its pupils'.²⁰ Moreover, other research reveals a view, present amongst even some heads and teachers, that some groups of pupils come from communities – frequently identified by ethnic origin – that will not respond to schooling.²¹ The reality is that schools and teachers construct and validate failures as much as they do successes.

The construction of failure in schools was acknowledged by Allègre when he announced the second phase of the anti-violence campaign in January 2000. Allègre blamed the implementation of streaming for exacerbating outbreaks of violence.²² Streaming becomes an instrument of segregation through setting, often on the basis of languages, including classics. In some urban areas, whereas sets studying ancient Greek tend to be regarded as prestigious and are dominated by middle-class white girls, the sets perceived as least prestigious are dominated by black boys. In any school system in the world the phenomenon of the bottom set produces an anti-school counter-culture in response to perceived and actual stigmatization. No amount of exhortation or civic education will attenuate the effects of an unjust, indeed institutionally racist system. The uncivil pupils are probably only too aware of Republican notions of justice and equality; what they observe constantly is the huge gap between the rhetoric and the reality.

Segregation also appears between schools. In spite of research showing that when family income is held constant ethnic minority (*immigré*) children perform better in school than children of French parents, schools with large numbers of minority pupils are stigmatized and shunned by parents. Moreover schools of this type are likely to have less-experienced teachers and when parents complain, the staff become very defensive, instead of taking the criticism seriously as they would in a prestigious school.

Ethnic minority parents bring their concerns to schools in ways that they could not do with other institutions such as the police. However, the weak pastoral structures of schools mean that teachers do not expect to have to deal directly with parents and the social distance between teachers and pupil parents is likely to be considerable. As a result, social relations between parents and educational personnel often introduce 'suspicion, discomfort and misunderstandings'.²³ Another quotation from the chair of the drafting committee for the non-statutory guidance for citizenship education illustrates the prevalent view that parents living in 'difficult neighbourhoods' 'often come

from countries which have never known democracy let alone republican neutrality', reflect the values of sexist cultures, and have no experience of political campaigning and therefore have problems dealing with the democratic structures of the republican school.²⁴

Such stereotypical views of immigrant populations are not based on realities.²⁵ Indeed there is considerable evidence that members of ethnic minorities are active in political movements, even if the decline of trade union membership in France means that many workers are now without a culture of trade unionism.²⁶ But mental constructs which identify social or educational problems with 'backward cultures' make an inclusive education for citizenship extremely difficult to achieve. The sociologist François Dubet observes that:

relationships in schools, like relationships in society as a whole, are increasingly racialized. Individuals are perceived as having an 'ethnic' identity and stigmatized. To put it simply, whereas previously schools would have described children as working class, now they describe them as immigrant children. Whereas before children were diagnosed as having problems because their fathers were poor, now they diagnose children as having problems because their fathers are 'immigrants', even if the child is of the third generation. Whereas before they identified the behaviour of boys as 'aggressive', now the behaviour is described as 'ethnic'.²⁷

Dubet also points out that, whereas in working class areas of France in the 1930s the *Parti Communiste* managed to get workers elected to local councils, there are hardly any ethnic minority councillors in France today. A combination of stigmatization and lack of role models may make it difficult for ethnic minority pupils in France to identify with a republican discourse that seems to deliver so little for them. Indeed, Dubet refers explicitly to a 'colonial' type of relationship between teachers, who live outside the neighbourhood, and the pupils. This, coupled with a school system where ethnic minority pupils are over-represented in the least successful classes, is capable of generating anti-school violence.

Any attempt to tackle school violence therefore needs to promote mutual respect. The Allègre plan of January 2000 recognized this, noting that 'When pupils feel that they are not respected, violence, consumption of alcohol and use of soft drugs increase.'²⁸ A similar approach may be seen in Lionel Jospin's discourse on 'civic morality' (*la morale civique*) after his victory in the June 1997 elections. In line

with this idea, the ministry circulated a booklet called 'Respectful Schools' (*l'école du respect*) to all primary schools and issued further national guidelines on school discipline and sanctions, aiming to bring school justice closer in line with standards applied in the rest of society. The new emphasis on mutual respect may help to create a more conducive atmosphere in which to tackle school violence, given that the most widespread manifestation of violence in French schools is psychological rather than physical: 'incivility' or 'latent violence', which is generally held to be on the increase.²⁹

Reform of schools

Effective education for citizenship has been found to depend on much more than well-constructed programmes of study. Education for civility requires that students have a sense of agency and opportunities for participation. Exhortation alone is not enough.³⁰

As a result, new expectations of schools and teachers require a radical transformation of schools as institutions. In particular teachers are expected to be not only agents of the state, epitomized by the ministry in Paris, but professionals in a dynamic relationship to the communities that the school serves. They are now expected to work with parents and agencies beyond the school and develop a range of teaching styles. Traditional formalistic lecturing to whole classes must be supplemented by approaches responsive to individual student needs.

A survey of all upper secondary schools (*lycées*) and their students in 1997/98 (conducted for the Merieu report) revealed that students demand more active, student-centred approaches to learning. The Merieu report affirms the basic principle that the *lycée* 'is an institution of the Republic which educates its pupils to become active and responsible citizens' and states that learning occurs as a result of the whole range of experiences available in the school, including teaching, the organization of the school community, external links, and relationships with teachers and with administrative and ancillary staff. The construction of the school as a learning community requires an entirely new relationship between teachers on the one hand and those responsible for discipline and administration (*la vie scolaire*) on the other. It also means that schools must encourage pupils to become active citizens, by improving representative structures and allowing pupils to organize themselves.³¹

The education ministry has moved towards this approach. Teachers of citizenship education have increasing opportunities for project work involving some choices of learning style for the pupils. For the middle

years of the lower secondary school (4e and 5e) this teaching approach is adopted for what are known as *parcours diversifiés*. This refers to the officially sanctioned practice of allocating the legal minimum time to each subject on the curriculum and using the remaining time for interdisciplinary work. Although such interdisciplinary work with a team of teachers can be around any subject, in practice schools often choose a theme linked to citizenship. For instance, schools may focus on the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December) or International Women's Day (8 March). In addition, schools are encouraged to participate in special projects conducted outside the formal curriculum. One example is the Citizenship Initiatives at School: Learning to Live Together (*Initiatives Citoyennes à l'École pour Apprendre à Vivre Ensemble*). The first of these was launched by the then schools minister, Ségolène Royal, with the support of local education authorities and the inspectorate in the autumn of 1997. Projects may focus on the school itself as an institution with rules and democratic structures such as elected pupil representatives. Schools are encouraged to work with external partners such as the local council, public services, institutions and recognized voluntary bodies and in particular to involve parents. Projects last a week and typically involve visits to the school from the police, fire and rescue service or magistrates; activities with the elderly or people with disabilities; cleaning up neglected areas or creating a nature reserve; cultural activities leading up to a concert or exhibition.

The *Initiatives Citoyennes* had strong institutional support. However, the initiative does not reach all schools and all pupils because it is voluntary. In order to improve the compulsory programme of citizenship education, inspectors and others involved have identified the need for improved initial and in-service teacher education. In 1999, the education ministry took three further steps to make teachers take citizenship education more seriously. The first attempted persuasion, by launching national and local initiatives and providing courses. The second was the introduction from 2000 of a formal compulsory examination on citizenship as part of the national school leaving certificate (*brevet du collège*). The third step was the inclusion of a compulsory question on citizenship education in the teachers' certificate examination (CAPES) for history and geography.

Conclusion

The perceived violence in French schools at the turn of the century was symptomatic of a crisis in the institution and by extension in the

Republic. One important and officially prescribed remedy is education for citizenship. The experience of the last two decades of the twentieth century revealed that this central component of schooling could not be effectively introduced without transforming schools and the relationships of adults and young people within them. This is starting to be addressed in the early years of the twenty-first century, although not without resistance.

The requirements for effective citizenship education are also the requirements for an effective democracy in a multi-racial France at ease with itself. Schools need to be pupil-centred, to engage with families and local communities, to have their own objectives and projects within a national framework of values and objectives. Above all schools need to be communities based on respect. A similar transformation of all the institutions of the Republic (police, housing, justice, government) is required if republican ideals are to be fulfilled. Violence can be interpreted as a result of the tension between the Republic's rhetoric and the realities. The transformation of schools to enable education for citizenship can be seen as a microcosm of the changes required if the Republic is to reinvent itself in order to live up to its proclaimed values.

Notes

1. See, for example: A. Chareye, *L'Institut et le Mammouth* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999); G. Morel and Tual-Loizeau, *L'Horreur pédagogique* (Paris: Ramsay, 1999); N. Revel, *Sale Prof* (Paris: Fixot, 1999).
2. J.-L. Lorrain, *Les violences scolaires* (Paris: PUF, 1999), p. 21.
3. É. Debarbieux, *La violence en milieu scolaire*, Vol. I, *État des lieux* (Paris: ESF, 1996).
4. B. Charlot, and J.-C. Emin (eds), *Violences à école: État des savoirs* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1997).
5. Lorrain, *Les violence scolaires*, p. 13.
6. See M. Wieviorka (ed.), *La violence en France* (Paris: Seuil, 1999) p.123.
7. B. Charlot, L. Emin and O. Peretti, 'Les aides-éducateurs: le lien social contre la citoyenneté', *Ville-École-Intégration*, 118 (1999).
8. Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale (1998), 'Guide Pratique approches partenariales en cas d'infraction dans un établissement scolaire', *Bulletin Officiel de l'Éducation nationale*, Hors Série, 11 (15 October 1998).
9. 'Enfin le renforcement et la mise en cohérence de l'éducation civique tout au long de la scolarité [de la maternelle au lycée] a permis de commencer à développer la sensibilité des jeunes aux valeurs et aux règles de toute vie en société ainsi qu'à leurs responsabilités futures de citoyens.' Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, *La phase II du plan de lutte contre la violence à l'école*. Dossier de la conférence de presse de Claude Allègre le 27 janvier 2000.
10. 'La formation du citoyen comprend une éducation à la civilité, une éducation à la vie en société, une éducation civique au sens politique qui désigne

l'initiation aux formes de la vie politique, aux institutions et à leur fonctionnement. La République est fondée sur une Constitution, elle requiert en même temps une vertu civique.' Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, *Histoire, Géographie, Education Civique: programmes et accompagnement* (Paris: Centre National de la Documentation Pédagogique, 1998).

11. Quoted in *Le Monde de l'Éducation*, July–August 2000, 50–1.
12. Lorrain, *Les violences scolaires*, p. 46; *Bulletin Officiel de l'Éducation nationale*, No. 22 (1997).
13. Article 2: 'S'appuyant sur une éducation à la responsabilité, cette formation doit permettre à tous les élèves d'acquérir les repères nécessaires à l'exercice de leur citoyenneté et aux choix d'orientation préalables à leur insertion culturelle, sociale et professionnelle future.' Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, *Histoire, Géographie, Education Civique*, p. 5.
14. *Le Monde*, 24 June 1999.
15. *Bulletin Officiel de l'Éducation nationale*, 1 (1999).
16. J.-L. Nembrini, *L'école et le citoyen*, mimeo. (Paris: Inspection Générale de l'Éducation Nationale, 1997).
17. F. Best, 'Les droits de l'homme, une éducation morale et civique pour notre temps', in Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique, *Pour une Éducation aux Droits de l'Homme*, Références documentaires, No. 30 (Paris: CNDP, 1989).
18. Ministère de l'Éducation, *Histoire, Géographie, Education Civique*, p. 37.
19. J. Costa-Lascoux, 'L'intégration: une renaissance démocratique?', *L'hebdo des socialistes*, 87 (15 January 1999), 13.
20. É. Debarbieux, *La violence en milieu scolaire*, vol. II, *Le désordre des choses* (Paris: ESF, 1999), p. 11.
21. J.-P. Payet, 'Violence à l'école: les coulisses du process', in B. Charlot and J.-C. Emin (eds), *Violences à l'école: Etat des savoirs* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1997).
22. 'La justice scolaire doit s'améliorer. Le recours aux classes de niveaux aggrave les phénomènes de violence.' Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, *La phase II du plan de lutte contre la violence à l'école*. Dossier de la conférence de presse de Claude Allègre le 27 janvier 2000.
23. Payet, op. cit., p. 153.
24. Costa-Lascoux, op. cit., p. 13.
25. H. Rey, 'La peur des banlieues', in P. Dewitte (ed.), *Immigration et Intégration: l'état des savoirs* (Paris: La Découverte, 1999), pp. 274–8.
26. T. Stenhouse, 'Cultural Diversity and the Maghreb Community in France', in T. Chafer (ed.), *Multicultural France*, Working Papers on Contemporary France, Volume 1 (University of Portsmouth: School of Languages and Area Studies, 1997).
27. F. Dubet, *Pourquoi changer l'école* (Paris: Textuel, 1999), p. 106.
28. Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, *La phase II du plan de lutte contre la violence à l'école*. Dossier de la conférence de presse de Claude Allègre le 27 janvier 2000.
29. F. Audigier, 'Citoyenneté? Quelques points de repère pour l'éducation', *Éducatifs*, 16 (1998).
30. A. Osler and H. Starkey, *Teacher Education and Human Rights* (London: Fulton, 1996); F. Audigier, *L'éducation à la citoyenneté* (Paris: INRP, 1999).
31. P. Merieu, *Quels savoirs enseigner dans les lycées? Rapport d'étape du Comité d'Organisation* (Lyon: Université Lyon II, 1998), p. 7.

Appendix 7.1 Unofficial summary of programmes of study for citizenship education in French lower secondary schools

6e (Year 7) The Individual Contrasted with the Citizen

Term 1. What is school for? School as a place to learn and as a learning community.

School as a community with different roles and with its own rules and democratic structures.

Education as a right: history of education for all; education as a public service and function of the State; *laïcité* (state neutrality) as a guiding principle.

Term 2. Human rights and duties. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) gives children rights and responsibilities.

Rights and responsibilities in school. Building a personal identity. Nationality and how to acquire French nationality if you don't already possess it. Democracy in school: electing class representatives.

Term 3. Responsibility to the environment and national heritage.

5e (Year 8) Equality, Solidarity, Security

Term 1. Equality.

Equality before the law

Unacceptability of discrimination, e.g. racism, sexism, disability, and of intolerance.

Equality of dignity. Protection against abuse. Health education.

Term 2. Solidarity.

Seeing oneself as part of a wider human community.

Humanitarian action.

Social security and the state.

Term 3. Security.

Health and safety in school and in society.

4e (Year 9) Freedoms, Rights and Justice

Term 1. Freedoms in conflict and the need for laws.

Freedoms and rights to equality: political struggles.

The media and society.

Term 2. The judicial system in France.

Term 3. Human rights and Europe.

The basis of a European citizenship: common values, national identities, democratic structures.

3e (Year 10) The Citizen and the Republic

Term 1. The values, principles and symbols of the Republic.

Democracy in the world and in France.

Citizenship, rights, responsibilities. How to become a French citizen.

Term 2. The institutions of the Republic.

Term 3. Collective action and citizenship: political parties, trade unions, forms of protest, rights at work.

8

The French 'Melting Pot': Outdated – or in Need of Reinvention?

Michèle Tribalat

The electoral success of the extreme right-wing FN in France in the 1980s and 1990s forced immigration to the top of the political agenda at the end of the twentieth century. Jean-Marie Le Pen's rejection of immigrants and of the possibility of their integration into French society challenged universalist republican notions of assimilation and citizenship. Many intellectuals argued that the assimilationist nature of the French 'melting pot' could itself lead to the marginalization and rejection of populations of foreign origin.¹ Before dealing with what could be reinvented in terms of the integration into the French nation of immigrants and their descendants, it is therefore necessary to examine the nature of the French 'melting pot'. This chapter will briefly describe the philosophy underlying the mechanisms for integrating foreign arrivals into the French nation and explain why they have recently been weakened. Firstly, however, reinvention suggests the rediscovery of something already known but currently forgotten. It is therefore necessary to begin with an overview of the century that has just ended.

Immigration flows in the late twentieth century

France has a long tradition of receiving foreign immigration. In the second half of the nineteenth century, it became a mass phenomenon. At that time, contrary to the trend in the rest of Europe where the population grew significantly, French industrial development coincided with a considerable slowing down of demographic growth. Immigration contributed, thereafter, to phases of demographic and economic growth, with pauses during crises or recession towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the 1930s and 1940s. In similar

fashion, more recently, and particularly since the mid-1970s, it has noticeably slowed down in a context of crisis.²

Early on, France emphasized the demographic function of immigration by devising very open legislation on nationality. This combined the right of citizenship by virtue of kinship and that of citizenship by virtue of birth in the country, thereby producing French nationals and avoiding a situation in which a part of the country's population remained indefinitely foreign. Because of this legislation, the demographic impact of foreign immigration is not well known, since it is mainly invisible. A study in the 1980s estimated this contribution by trying to re-calculate what the French population would have been in the absence of foreign immigrants over the course of almost a century. On 1 January 1986, the population of metropolitan France would have been a mere 45 million, or 10 million less than the true figure.³ Today the shortfall would probably be close to 12 million.

The demographic contribution of immigration was modest after the First World War, with 3.7 million arrivals, but was then stimulated by a migratory wave. The immigrant population doubled between 1946 and 1975, but subsequently stagnated. In the 1970s, a direct contribution was replaced by an indirect one, that is to say by the births that would not have taken place in the absence of immigration. Globally, the number of persons born in France as a consequence of immigration alone quadrupled from 1.7 million in 1946 to 6.3 million forty years later. Two-thirds of this population have French nationality. The crucial role of immigration in French demography is noticeable in the birth rate: without it the number of births in 1985 would have been 600,000 whereas the number actually reached 769,000. Foreign immigration therefore partly explains the rise in the birth rate between 1953 and 1964 and helped to attenuate the fall in the birth rate in the 1970s. However, in terms of demographic structure, the effects of immigration are limited. This reflects the relatively permanent, and therefore cumulative, nature of the migratory phenomenon in France since the end of the nineteenth century.⁴

Ignorance of the scale of the demographic contribution and mechanisms of immigration have led us to believe that, when necessary, it would be easy to control migratory flows and strictly regulate the presence in France of populations of foreign origin. This illusion has informed many unsuccessful political moves to limit immigration and even repatriate immigrant populations. It has arisen because very little information has been collected on the ethnic origins of the French population. It is a taboo subject that nevertheless reveals the

intense intermingling of populations that has occurred and which is the main attribute of 'the French melting pot'.⁵

Using official population figures, it has been possible to estimate how many people born in France in the mid-1980s had at least one immigrant parent or grandparent.⁶ About 30 per cent of the people born in 1985 were estimated to be of foreign descent, going back two generations at the most. This proportion was already close to 23 per cent at the beginning of the 1950s, at a time when the birth rate in France was significantly higher than today, owing in particular to the presence of the grandchildren of the immigrants who arrived in the migratory wave between the two World Wars. On 1 January 1986, 10 million people were estimated to have an immigrant parent or grandparent. Amongst this 10 million, about half were estimated to be of direct foreign descent and two-thirds French. In total, slightly more than 80 per cent of these 10 million people of foreign descent are French nationals. If the four million immigrants are added to this number, 14 million people, or one-quarter of the French population, are either immigrants or the children or grandchildren of at least one immigrant.

The spread of this ethnic intermingling within the French population with the passing of generations explains why it is so difficult to deal with immigration as a separate demographic factor reproducing itself over the generations. It also consequently explains the somewhat ineffective nature of the concept of ethnic minorities. Indeed, the French socio-political system relies on integration into the French nation on an individual basis.

The French model of integration

The French republican model of integration is explicitly assimilationist. Assimilation is a condition of national integration. Indeed, if French legislation on citizenship is based on an a priori appreciation of the bond with France, and therefore remains one of the most generous in Europe, it is nevertheless openly assimilationist. Hence the procedure for naturalization by decree includes an investigation carried out by the *préfecture* into the candidate's morality, loyalty and assimilation. This investigation verifies that the candidate's competence in French is sufficient for everyday life, and enquires into the candidate's interest in the host society through his or her personal and professional sociability and respect of French customs and practices. In the procedure for acquiring French nationality by marriage, candidates sign a declaration

that the government can then reject within one year, by decree of the Council of State. Failure to assimilate is a reason for rejection of requests for naturalization, and is mainly based on linguistic competence, 'taking into account the candidate's circumstances'.

The relative ease with which one can become French through an *a priori* evaluation of the bond with France makes the code of nationality very flexible. It automatically grants French nationality to young people born in France of foreign parents when they reach the age of eighteen, while the children of foreign parents themselves born in France have French nationality from birth. French legislation considers that in two generations, immigrants' descendants are sociologically French and acts accordingly. The code of nationality thus relies on a theory of assimilation that inexorably takes place over two generations whatever the ethnic origin. The French universalist tradition gives more importance to individual qualities than collective ones. In theory, cultural, ethnic or religious characteristics are therefore no obstacle to assimilation.

It is necessary to emphasize the political essence of the French nation, in which the universalist principle plays a crucial part. In this conception, assimilation is a social process resulting from foreign populations and populations of foreign origin adapting their behaviour and learning the founding principles of the nation and the customs of the host society. This means progressively abandoning cultural specificities contrary to these principles and customs, and particularly everything contributing to gender inequalities and the ostracism of women. Cultural and linguistic assimilation and the intermingling of populations reduce tensions over essential values (secularism, equality, and in particular gender equality). It is this erosion of particularisms that allows the survival of the universalist myth.

Individual goodwill is not in question. In this conception, any dysfunction is not down to insufficient individual capabilities, but is the result of the problems of French society and its institutions. This is either because these institutions, and particularly schools, can no longer produce citizens who are free of communitarian identities and who subscribe to the founding principles on which national cohesion lies (secularism, equality, particularly between men and women), or because these principles are scorned and reality is drifting dangerously away from the myth of republican equality. Indeed, in order to achieve national integration by the aggregation of people sharing these common values, it is necessary to produce citizens who believe in them.

Today, the issue of immigration is at the heart of French political debate. This obsessive focus is due to the fact that through immigration, the capacity of French society to keep its principles alive and to produce national cohesion around them is in question. The current French malaise around the issues of immigration and integration amounts to a questioning of the nation's political philosophy. Some reject this, arguing that the issue is one of incapacity or goodwill, or even the desire for integration, on the part of immigrants that are too culturally different and cannot be assimilated. Yet, the little knowledge that we have does not confirm, at least for the recent past, the idea that the French model is stumbling against insurmountable distinctive identities.

Cultural diversity and the integration process

Today, the real or imaginary difficulties facing the process of integration call into question the French model. On the basis of apparently insurmountable cultural diversity and proclaimed distinctive identities, there is a strong temptation towards either a relativism of values that leads to a fragmented multicultural society, or social rigidity through the expulsion of non-conformist and undesired individuals.

A detailed study of behaviour and its evolution over the generations, from a survey on geographic mobility and social insertion carried out in 1992 by the Institut National d'Études Démographiques with the assistance of the Institut National des Statistiques et Études Économiques, does not confirm the idea of insurmountable cultural specificities and practices.⁷ This research studied the behaviour of several groups of immigrants, and for those with Spanish, Portuguese and Algerian origins, provided data on young adults aged 20–29 years and born in France. The study of the linguistic, religious and matrimonial practices of young people of Algerian origin does not show an inflexible group incapable of adapting its practices to the French context.

In the first place, linguistic practices have changed very rapidly over the generations. Immigrants who have come to France after reaching adulthood have generally made the effort to use the French language to communicate with their children, in most cases alongside the mother tongue, even if the French spoken is far from perfect. These children, when adults themselves, speak almost exclusively French to their children.

As regards Islam, much is said today of the Islamization of young people although we do not know how to measure the scale of this phenomenon or its durability. We tend to have great difficulty evaluating the long-term trends in Islamic practices. The tendency is, however, towards a secularization of practices. Firstly, Algerian immigrants are the least practising Muslims in France. Their children, born in France and now at an adult age, are even less practising and are just as likely as other French people to demonstrate a certain religious indifference. Fasting and dietary restrictions belong to the cultural domain. Their practice still remains common among young generations born in France, but seems to decline with ethnic concentration and emancipation from the family.⁸

The study of matrimonial practices shows that even if a certain endogamy subsists, it should not be associated too strictly with Islam, as the example of young people born in France of Algerian origin demonstrates. Marriage between cousins has become exceptional and arranged marriages are noticeably less frequent. Resistance to the traditional family model manifests itself in a certain reluctance towards, and postponement of, family life. In order to neutralize their families' wishes, young people tend to delay cohabitation and marriage. Among those who live in couples, half the men share their life with a woman of French origin (French born in France from parents born in France), a proportion close to that observed among young people with Portuguese origins (59 per cent). As expected, a union with a man with French origins is more difficult and rarer among young women with Algerian origins (24 per cent against 47 per cent among those with Portuguese origins). Almost half the young women of Algerian extraction and a third of those of Portuguese extraction lived with an immigrant. Islam is therefore not the sole explanation for this more pronounced tendency towards endogamy for girls.

On average, when they live in areas with a small concentration of immigrant populations, Algerian immigrants' sons who live in a couple share their life with a young woman of French extraction as frequently as Portuguese immigrants' sons. However, mixed marriages, which are still quite rare, remain strongly under the control of families, and most mixed unions are cohabitations. Somewhat paradoxically, families are more tolerant of 'a bad choice' in the case of cohabitation as it avoids the publicity of an unapproved marriage.

The convergence of norms concerning family size is particularly spectacular among young people of Algerian extraction, even when they have been brought up in a very large family. They wish to have

2.7 children on average, roughly the same as other young people of the same age, whereas they grew up in families with an average of nearly eight children. Moreover, figures for starting a family (accumulated birth rates by age group) do not presage a very high birth rate, particularly among young women of Algerian extraction, who enter into cohabitation later and therefore start a family later in life.

Changes in customs and practices in France mean that the question of the assimilation of populations of foreign origin is not a social issue that can pose a challenge to the functioning of the French 'melting pot' on the grounds of cultural difference. Observation does not confirm the idea of intransigent Muslim populations, unable to adopt the principle of secularism and adapt their behaviour. Furthermore, young people with foreign origins, and especially those of Algerian extraction, are not under any illusions as to their national identity.

Threats to the French model of integration

The difficulties faced by the social integration of French people of foreign origin, particularly when they come from the Maghreb, reflect a drift of French society away from its model. We can refer here to the results of the 1992 research previously mentioned.⁹

Schools are often blamed. However, an examination of the education of young adults of foreign origin does not justify such a condemnation of the education system, at least in general terms and as it functioned from the 1960s to the 1980s. Born of parents with little or no education, belonging to the lowest social classes (80 per cent of those born between 1963 and 1972 come from working-class backgrounds) and not always able to speak French, or at least correctly, young people of foreign origin accumulate large handicaps from the very start, especially when one considers the importance of social background and the level of education of the mother in the academic performance of French children.

When one neutralizes the effect of social origin and studies children from exclusively working-class backgrounds, one notes that their education is similar. Hence, the proportion of young men of Algerian extraction with the *baccalauréat* is close to that of other young men of French origin. However, young people of Algerian extraction represent the largest proportion without qualifications (25 per cent against 11 per cent among young people of French origin). But this phenomenon also affects young people of Spanish or Portuguese extraction (slightly more than 20 per cent remain without any qualifications). Among women,

those of Spanish origin have the highest qualifications. Those of Portuguese extraction more often have a short technical qualification, but their performances are not dissimilar to those of young women of French extraction. Young women of Algerian extraction are in the most difficult situation: 22 per cent of them have no qualifications (against 13 to 14 per cent amongst others) and they are no more likely to have the *baccalauréat* than their male counterparts.

It is therefore among young people with Algerian origins that the lack of qualifications is the most common. However, about 70 per cent have either a technical qualification (Certificat d'Apprentissage Professionnel-Brevet d'Etudes Professionnelles) or a qualification equivalent to or higher than the *baccalauréat*. Besides, boys with Portuguese or Spanish origins are not much better off. The handicap of Algerian immigrants' children is therefore relative, particularly if one compares it to the parents' lack of formal education: whereas the fathers and mothers of young people of French extraction and working-class backgrounds all attended school, the majority of those of children of Algerian origin did not.

Young people of Algerian extraction experience the greatest job insecurity and a high rate of unemployment (40 per cent for both sexes, against 11 per cent for men and 20 per cent for women of French origin). Young men of Algerian extraction encounter the greatest difficulties in finding and keeping employment. They are also more likely to experience long-term unemployment and greater insecurity upon entering the labour market. With a similar level of education, those of Portuguese extraction seem relatively protected, and have initial professional experiences quite close to the national average. Young women of Algerian origin also have greater difficulties, reflected in higher levels of long-term unemployment at the start of their active life. Even when they are relatively qualified (*baccalauréat* or higher) young people of Algerian extraction find it much harder to capitalize on their qualifications and suffer more from unemployment (twice as much as the average for young people with the same qualifications).

Several factors explain the extremely difficult situation facing young people of Algerian extraction. Whereas young people of Portuguese origin enter the job market through family and community networks, even if it means a social regression, those of Algerian origin are possibly less resigned to social reproduction and end up unemployed more often. The absence of networks to support the social mobility of those with the highest qualifications has, for them, more tragic consequences. These young people, some of whom are the youngest of a

large family, mostly have fathers who are, on average, quite elderly, retired or deceased and who are therefore out of the employment market, contrary to young people of Portuguese extraction of whom two-thirds of the fathers still worked at the time of the survey. Thus, the level of education acquired by young people of Algerian origin does not always allow them to find employment that matches their expectations. The effect of their impatience is probably worsened by images inherited from their fathers. These are tainted with outdated stereotypes linked to colonialism.

Even if these young people are given greater help due to their concentration in problem areas, the severity of their situation necessarily leads to the question of discriminatory practices. These are particularly noticeable in a context of low employment. For the generations born in the 1960s and early 1970s, problems arise more on the labour market than at school. Even with qualifications, a disproportionate number of young people of Algerian origin are unemployed. A more recent study, carried out in the suburbs of Lille, showed that young people with qualifications and of North African origin were victims of an abnormally high unemployment rate.¹⁰

The presence of discrimination leading to a severe handicap for these French of North African origin raises the problem of coherence between republican principles and the reality of French society. For a long time the subject of discrimination remained taboo because of the threat it poses to republicanism, and it is only in recent years that studies have broached the question. However, there is a blatant lack of sufficient data for a true analysis of the situation. This reflects a reluctance to lay to rest the illusion of equality, and inflexible thinking with regard to providing the tools necessary for the development of statistically supported arguments. We will come back to this issue. The taboo that prevents the development of data detailing the French population according to ethnic origin, not to mention any self-classification of the type used in the 1991 population census in Great Britain, has also delayed any acknowledgement of the worsening geographic dimension of the socio-ethnic split in France. France boasts that it has avoided American-style ghettos, but bases this on less than reliable data on nationality which tend to underestimate the extent of spatial segregation. Using ethnic categories to analyse data on young people aged under twenty-five, it is possible to draw a more accurate, if rather worrying, picture of demographic concentration.¹¹

In France overall, about 17 per cent of young people had at least one immigrant parent in 1990. But in some departments the proportion of

young people with at least one immigrant parent was significantly larger. The Seine-Saint Denis *département* in the Paris region has the highest concentration, with 45 per cent of young people of foreign origin. Three other counties in the Paris region exceed 30 per cent: Paris, the Val de Marne and the Hauts de Seine. According to the census, in total in the Parisian region, one-third of young people are of foreign extraction. Six other *départements* show concentrations of between 25 per cent and 30 per cent: the Rhône, the Isère, the Alpes-Maritimes, the Yvelines, the Pyrénées-Orientales and the Moselle.

Demographic concentration is even more significant at the level of the commune, with strong variations according to the size of the commune. Whereas the proportion of young people with foreign origins is 17 per cent at the national level, it becomes 27 per cent for towns of 30,000 inhabitants or more, but is only 13 per cent in smaller towns. Immigration has been directed primarily towards urban centres and has contributed to their demographic growth: 45 per cent of young people of foreign origin live in towns of 30,000 inhabitants or more, compared with only 25 per cent of young people of French extraction. Furthermore, these proportions vary a great deal according to ethnic origin: populations originating from Maghreb, and especially from black Africa, are more concentrated, due to the fact that they live in larger towns. They are therefore over-represented in these urban areas, in particular in towns of 30,000 inhabitants or more.

Some towns have concentrations exceeding 50 per cent. Those with the greatest concentrations include medium-size towns on the periphery of large cities (Paris, Lyon, Marseille), some districts of the latter and some medium-size towns outside these large cities. In those towns where more than half of the young people have foreign origins, one can observe an ethnic swing at the bottom of the age pyramid that does not, however, affect all districts equally. Spatial ethnic segmentation is extremely strong. In one of the towns studied, the scale of concentration by district ranged from 81 per cent in a suburb to 17 per cent in the town centre. One can thus observe micro-concentrations according to the type of habitation. These towns also generally have younger populations than the national average. Thus, in the same town, the under-25s constitute 44 per cent of the population whereas they represent only 27 per cent of the total French population. Also, the population is youngest in those districts where the concentration of populations of foreign origin is the highest. Thus, these ethnic divisions between districts also reflect important social divisions.

The statistical studies carried out from population census figures in various parts of the country reveal that the so-called social divide is also an ethnic divide. The dividing line between the well-off and the disadvantaged generally follows the one separating populations of North African provenance (or the dominant group among these) with low levels of cultural capital from the middle and upper classes with the *baccalauréat* or higher. This clearly emerges from statistical studies carried out on the total French population, in towns of 30,000 inhabitants and more, on the population of the large towns of Seine-Saint-Denis, and in two towns in particular. At all levels, social and ethnic characteristics are highlighted (proportion of people without qualifications, working class and ethnic concentration). The more detailed the geographic examination, the more apparent the socio-ethnic divide becomes.

The social relegation of populations of foreign origin to disadvantaged districts immediately places them in a situation of inequality in relation to populations of French extraction. Children generally have fewer opportunities to go to good schools, and nowadays their qualifications are often thought to be suspect. As they live in towns affected by industrial decline, competition in the labour market is fierce. To these circumstances that are shared by their neighbours of French extraction, one must add the discrimination that puts them in a situation of even greater inequality. Racism and discrimination may become so prominent locally that they become factors of local identity. The fate of some districts, abandoned by the Republic to their own devices, shows that the republican model is failing. Not surprisingly, disaffection for republican values is accelerating in these areas.

The French model of integration has, it seems, been grinding to a halt over recent years, under the impact of a long-lasting economic crisis in which a shortage of jobs, particularly those requiring low qualifications has become the norm. The education system is at the heart of the tensions confronting the Republic because its purpose has changed, under the effects of its own expansion and the demands of the economy. Teachers, the former standard-bearers of the Republic, have become the instruments of a system that benefits the affluent classes. Education may even have become a mechanism for producing exclusion. It provides a future for some and denies it to others. It selects. Open to all, education has become very non-egalitarian. In the past, it trained children whose social future was determined by their social background, with the exception of particular talents. It did not therefore generate the same frustrations as today when children must

prove themselves individually in a complex and confusing education system. They all have the right to take part in the competition but they are responsible for their failure. Moreover, success or failure seems to determine their whole life. At the bottom of the social ladder, the children of immigrants are caught in this trap when it is precisely education that appeared to be their only hope of social progression. While the function of education has changed and appears today more like a tool for determining the future of individuals than the essential mechanism for producing citizens, thereby destabilizing the egalitarian ideal, universalist discourse is losing its credibility in a French society threatened by its socio-ethnic divisions. *De facto* inequality, as we have seen, contributes to the pronounced discrediting of republican discourse.

The weakening of the republican model therefore seems to be happening at both ends, so to speak. On the one hand, there is a real weakening of the public powers through changes in education, but also through changes in other public services. One only needs to think of the powerlessness of the police and justice system in a context where crime has greatly increased. National service, also, has recently been abolished. The state has, therefore, greater difficulty in producing citizens. This function has been made all the more difficult as individualism continues to spread, causing a relativism in values, and because France is committed to the European Union, resulting in a loss of sovereignty in some areas. On the other hand, the idea that the Republic guarantees the equality of all citizens is less and less accepted. The republican model itself is disappearing from people's consciousness.

Those two trends, the undermining of the production of citizens by the state and the disappearance of the republican model in the collective consciousness, reinforce each other. The difficulties encountered, including by those with qualifications, in finding employment lead families to lose interest in their children's education. What is the point in working hard for success at school if you are going to be discriminated against upon leaving? This frame of mind fatally increases the difficulties encountered by the education system.

Moreover, while immigrant populations and those of foreign origin are victims of disillusionment, populations of French extraction also dangerously contest the republican ideal. The new economic era which began in the 1970s and which is characterized by a shortage of jobs, particularly those requiring few qualifications, de-legitimizes the mass presence of immigrant populations brought in to work in industries that are now in decline. Job scarcity has turned employment into a

further factor of division in towns with a high concentration of populations of foreign origin. These are towns marked by industrial decline and high numbers of young people of immigrant origin, where ethnic segregation is tight, and anti-Arab racism, as well as its mirror-image, anti-French racism, have developed. Mass unemployment, and the consequently increasing demands for qualifications from employers, mean that candidates with few or no qualifications are left behind in an over-abundant pool of youth. Amongst this pool, which includes a large number of young people of North African origin, the least qualified and least mobile are likely to distance themselves from institutions and become involved in illicit dealings. The central part that work plays in socialization is thus undermined.

In these towns, competition for qualified jobs is fierce. Young people of North African origin suffer the consequences and are considered as the illegitimate rivals of young people of French extraction. For the latter, the prospect of becoming a demographic minority accentuates the rivalry and also explains exclusionary employment practices along the lines of 'resisting the invaders', from the personnel of companies that do not traditionally recruit immigrants, and from companies, including managers, who subscribe to the local way of thinking. A hierarchical system based on the legitimacy of claims to be French leads to the definition of unequal rights to occupy certain jobs according to one's origin. This tendency to move the boundary between foreigners and French people within the national community results in the development of a national preference: jobs are scarce and they are offered first to people of French origin. The republican conscience is weakened since a long French ancestry is considered to be a privilege that confers certain rights. The republican ideal itself is in danger in the consciousness of those who have deep French roots, and who are supposed to provide the mould into which the new French nationals must fit.

A vicious circle appears in which the erosion of French political philosophy is reinforced by the disillusionment of some and the rejection of republican ideals by others. Rejecting populations of North African origin can lead them to privilege other forms of identity than the national community, especially when discrimination evidently prevents them from fully exercising their rights as French citizens. Ethnic segmentation, social relegation and racism all contribute to the strengthening of a Muslim identity and create favourable grounds for the actions of Islamist movements. Those that have appeared in recent years have had no difficulty in denouncing the failings of republican

principles and tend to take the place of failing institutions (family, school) in the normative formation of young people. They advocate a social regulation in accordance with Islamic texts, and engage in social action to solve local problems, attempting to supplant public social services through efficient action.

Even if these processes only occur in some areas, they undermine the general philosophy of the Republic. Although the situation in France is not really comparable to that of the United States, there are clear similarities in terms of spatial segregation.¹² The concentration of immigration populations and social problems in certain areas reinforces the social problems in those areas and creates an exclusionary effect. Spatial segregation contributes to the acceleration of the process of abandonment of the republican ideal, not only in people's minds, but also in entire geographic areas.

The geographic concentration of problems, and the consequent possibility that most people can avoid them, also carries the risk of weakening the collective awareness of how they corrupt general republican political philosophy. Unless care is taken, the deteriorating situation in some areas may jeopardize the societal assimilation process which we have observed above, and thereby undermine the performance of the famous French melting pot. Such a reversal would validate the arguments of those that claim that some cultural specificities are plainly insurmountable, and could favour the development of demands, that are already emerging here and there, for a special status for Muslims.

Conclusion

France has obvious difficulties in facing up to the problems outlined in this chapter. Opinion formers remain reluctant to accept reality as it is. Many politicians and policy experts remain imbued with republican ideology and find it difficult to accept the diagnosis that the republican model is in trouble. There is even an element of superstition, as if admitting that the French model of integration is facing difficulties would mean abandoning it altogether. To make such a case would be an admission of guilt. This partly explains the reluctance to put in place the tools necessary for reliable research. Making distinctions among the French according to their origin would constitute a sin against the Republic.

The presence on the political scene of a powerful far right does not help. It has prevented the emergence of a calmer debate about the current difficulties that French society faces in putting its republican

ideal into practice. Nothing can be said that may reinforce the ideology of the far right, even if this means masking reality. The presence of the *Front National* (FN) has thus been a great obstacle to intellectual and political debate in France. In seeking above all to refute the arguments of the FN, many intellectuals and politicians have paid the price of incoherence, over-simplification, and even untruth. For instance, if the FN spoke of France being swamped by immigrants, its opponents had to downplay the scale of immigration, whatever the reality. If the far right raised the problem of crime and violence, the issue became taboo. A great deal of time and energy has been spent discrediting the discourse of the far right, at the expense of real discussion. The FN has thus managed to structure the debate on immigration and integration around its own terms.

If one thing needs to be reinvented in France, it is the ability to debate without the far right. Its centrality to French political life has imprisoned political debate in the past and restricted it to theatrical and useless but comforting stereotypes. The prominence of the fascist threat justifies every hyperbole and invective to the extent that a French philosopher, Pierre-André Taguieff, diagnosed a new 'mad left disease'.¹³ The French right was compelled continuously to demonstrate its difference to the FN and could not really position itself autonomously, whereas the left benefited from its presence while having to keep a close watch on its own extremist wings.

The electoral slide of the far right following internal splits in the late 1990s offered the opportunity to free public debate from its grip. France needs to reflect upon social issues autonomously, without constantly referring to the far right. This would allow opinion formers to agree on a diagnosis of social problems through the development of objective measures of observation. This requires the use of categories to monitor particular groups, particularly in order to develop local analyses that include the ethnic dimension. Although this idea is spreading, reluctance remains. France is probably the only country in Europe in which the front page of national and regional newspapers and magazines can be taken up for several days by a methodological controversy over the measurement of populations of foreign origin using categories referring to the birthplace of parents.

If some kind of agreement on the diagnosis is forthcoming, the political debate should refocus mainly on the political action to be undertaken, and the direction it should take, particularly by openly discussing the necessity and means of upholding the republican political ideal.

Notes

1. This was the case, for example, in E. Todd, *Le destin des immigrés* (Paris: Seuil, 1994). On the other hand, also at the beginning of the 1990s, D. Schnapper argued the case for the traditional French approach to the integration of immigrants in *La France de l'intégration* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991).
2. See P. Weil, 'Pour une nouvelle politique d'immigration', *Notes de la Fondation* (Paris: Fondation Saint-Simon, 1995).
3. M. Tribalat, 'Chronique de l'immigration', *Population; Sujet spécial: Estimation de la population étrangère en France au premier janvier 1986. Application à l'analyse de la fécondité des étrangers en France, de 1982 à 1985*, 1 (1989).
4. M. Tribalat (ed.), *Cent ans d'immigration. Etrangers d'hier, Français d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: INED/PUF, 1991).
5. G. Noiriel, *Le Creuset français* (Paris: Seuil, 1988).
6. Tribalat, *Cent ans d'immigration*.
7. M. Tribalat (ed.), *De l'immigration à l'assimilation. Enquête sur les population d'origine étrangère en France* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996).
8. On religious practice among the young, see also: M. Tribalat, *Faire France* (Paris: La Découverte, 1995).
9. M. Tribalat (ed.), *De l'immigration à l'assimilation*.
10. D. Schnapper (ed.), *Exclusions au coeur de la cité* (Paris: Anthropos, 2001).
11. The material for this section is treated in more detail in M. Tribalat, 'Immigration et concentrations urbaines', in D. Cohen (ed.), *France: les révolutions invisibles* (Paris: Calman-Lévy/Magnum Photos/Fondation Saint-Simon, 1998).
12. D.S. Massey and N.A. Denton, *American Apartheid: segregation and the making of the underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
13. P.A. Taguieff and M. Tribalat, *Face au Front National. Arguments pour une contre-offensive* (Paris: La Découverte, 1998).

9

Reinventing Everyday Life in France: the Reduction of Working Time

Marie-Christine Kok Escalle

When the socialists came to power in France in 1981, they spoke of their desire to change people's lives and reinvent social relations. One of the means to achieve this change was the reduction of working time. In the 1980s and 1990s, unemployment became the most important problem facing France, and successive governments endeavoured to solve it. In their campaign for the 1997 parliamentary elections, the socialists proposed the 35-hour week as a means of allying these two objectives: reducing unemployment, and improving the quality of working people's lives.¹ The proposals then materialized in the Aubry laws of 1998 and 2000.² The purpose of these laws goes far beyond the reduction of unemployment: they reflect the state's intervention in the life of French people, and correspond to a social project through the establishment of a new form of social relations and of citizenship, and through the development of new individual and collective ethics. After placing working-time reduction in its historical context, this chapter will analyse the repercussions of these laws.

Working-time reduction in france

In 1997, as in 1936, changes in working time were initiated by the state, which proposed a new framework for citizens' and workers' lives. Following the Matignon Agreements of 8 June 1936, the radical-socialist government of the Popular Front passed laws granting all employees two weeks paid leave, at the employer's expense (20 June 1936), and limiting the working week to 40 hours (21 June 1936). The application of this law was suspended because of the war, and after the Second World War, several reminders that the legal working week was 40 hours were required; in 1946, 1956 and 1969. The third week's paid

leave was granted in 1956, and the fourth in 1969. In 1982, the socialist government passed a law giving a fifth week's paid leave and limiting the legal working week to 39 hours. In the 1998 and 2000 legislation, the working week was dramatically reduced from 39 to 35 hours.

In most European countries, unemployment grew relentlessly in the 1980s and the 1990s, averaging 10.4 per cent for the period 1981–2000.³ Between 1977 and 1997, successive governments attempted to reduce unemployment, particularly among young people.⁴ However, the measures taken proved to be insufficient to absorb unemployment, especially long-term and youth unemployment. Jospin, therefore, put the question on the European agenda (at the 1997 Amsterdam Summit, the 1997 Luxembourg Summit and the June 1998 Cardiff Summit), and made it the priority of his government's economic and social policies. Legislation to reduce working time was intended to support the measures that needed to be taken at company level, in terms of reorganizing production and adapting workforces by raising qualifications.

The announcement, in the autumn of 1997, that job sharing would be imposed by the state through future legislation to introduce the 35-hour week on 1 January 2000, rather than simply left to the 'social partners' to introduce through collective bargaining, provoked the wrath of the organized employers' lobby. It led directly to the resignation of Jean Gandois, president of the main employers' organization, the *Conseil National du Patronat Français*.⁵ The state's direct intervention was subsequently criticized by the trade unions and by many experts, including those sympathetic to the idea of working-time reduction. However, the implementation of this law was to be the product of consultation amongst concerned parties.

The government proposed a first 'framework' law ('Aubry I'), which, whilst announcing a fixed deadline for reduction of working time, called on employers and unions to negotiate on the conditions of its implementation. The government would, thereafter, draw conclusions from these negotiations in a second law on the negotiated reduction of working time. The Framework Law on the Reduction of Working Time (No. 98-461), adopted on 13 June 1998, stipulates that 'the legal working time of salaried personnel is 35 hours a week', from 1 January 2000 for companies with more than twenty employees, and from 1 January 2002 for other companies (Article 1). Through complex legal dispositions, this law proposes amendments to the Labour Code, a redefinition of the notion of work, and presupposes a certain vision of

citizens in society. Its main objective is not only to reduce working time (as its title indicates), but also to create jobs (not mentioned until Article 3, IV). Companies who achieve both would receive financial support.

In reality, devolving implementation to the 'social partners' means that the 35-hour week is a flexible notion. The reduction can be implemented by changing working time on a daily, weekly, monthly or annual basis, through additional leave or time banking to save gained free days over several years (with a maximum of five years). The negotiated agreement must be circulated and publicized within, as well as outside, the company, while the state provides financial and technical support in order to facilitate negotiations within companies.⁶

As part of its campaign of information and encouragement, the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity publishes regular bulletins on the 35-hour week to report on the effects that the law has on job creation, and insists on the necessity of 'reflection on work organization, the use of equipment, the balance between family and professional life, and working conditions as well as the financial conditions of the reduction of working time, which can only take place within the company'.⁷ We will see below what occurs in practice.

The effects of the Aubry laws

The second 'Aubry Law' ('Aubry II'), which was finally adopted on 19 January 2000, established a social and temporal framework for a society undergoing profound change. Contrary to the Robien Law of 11 June 1996, which offered incentives for companies to reduce working hours substantially but on a voluntary basis,⁸ the Aubry laws confirmed a deadline for a weekly working time of 35 hours (1 January 2000 for companies with over 20 workers, and 1 January 2002 for smaller companies). The government clearly wished to instil a new social dynamic, with a renewal of trade union action and the development of flexibility within companies in order to improve social cohesion. Employers, however, remained hostile to the project despite the financial incentives on offer and the opportunities for the introduction of greater flexibility into the workplace. Objections centred on what was seen as growing state intervention in workplace social relations and the harmful economic effects of the 35-hour week. During a large rally held on 4 October 1999 at the Palais des Expositions at the Porte de Versailles, on the theme of 'For freedom of enterprise, against the Aubry Law', the *Mouvement des*

Entreprises de France (Medef, formerly CNPF) and the CGPME (Confederation of small and medium-size companies) appealed to their members 'to act to promote the entrepreneurial spirit, and productive activity, and to defend the freedom of enterprise'. The President of the Medef, Ernest-Antoine Seillière, claimed that the first Aubry Law would isolate France from the international economy, by pushing young French entrepreneurs abroad to start a business on the one hand, and by discouraging foreign entrepreneurs from coming to France on the other. The Medef continued to campaign on the theme of new labour market rigidities imposed by the reforms, and worked hard to make it central to the election campaigns of 2002.⁹

But despite employer hostility to the legislation, the reforms contributed to a wave of collective agreements on the question of working time at both company and sectoral levels. According to the ministry for employment and social affairs, 26,618 company-level agreements were signed between 13 June 1998 (the date of Aubry I) and March 2000, covering three million private sector employees and creating or saving 175,000 jobs. Of these, most – 152,000 – were new creations. When the employees covered by 'Robien agreements' and those working 35 hours or less before 1996 are included, 3.5 million people in France, or 28.4 per cent of the full-time workforce, were working 35 hours per week or less in 2000. In addition, over the same period 132 branch level agreements, covering ten million employees were signed.¹⁰ The movement towards reduced working time looks set to continue over the next few years, although its impact has been limited by new concessions in October 2001 which allowed greater use of overtime in small companies.

In addition, the new wave of collective agreements would appear to suggest that the reduction of working time is well on the way to achieving another of its aims. Like the 1982 Auroux laws, the Aubry laws devolved the implementation of working-time reduction to the social partners in order to stimulate local collective bargaining and dialogue. Several studies have shown that where they are present, trade unions rarely refuse to sign agreements on the reduction of working time, and that these generally lead to a 10 per cent reduction (although 5 per cent of agreements go further, to 15 per cent). Furthermore, for nine employees out of ten, this occurs without any loss of earnings in exchange for agreement on future wage restraint and greater flexibility, particularly through the 'annualization' of hours.¹¹

With this law, the legislature has established a framework in which information must be shared, involving government, the Parliament, public opinion and the public administration, and creating a space for dialogue through negotiation and an information system fed by the government and companies. The state argues for a new social contract, a new conception of the relationship between citizens and their work, which is based on a compromise between flexibility and the sharing of employment in the name of social solidarity. In a context of international competition, it is also in the interests of French companies to take advantage of the reorganization of working time to reorganize work within the company in order to become more competitive. However, the social and economic ideal sketched out by the state does not always match reality, as experienced by French citizens.

Reinventing French society: the challenge of changing social behaviour

The laws on the 35-hour week aim to increase employment rates and improve the quality of life of citizens by creating a new space for leisure, as well as encouraging new social relations driven by social responsibility and participation. Their aims are deliberately social (reinforcing social cohesion by introducing fundamental solidarity through job sharing), economic (reorganizing work in order for companies to be more competitive in a global market) and political (developing dialogue between the social partners and reinforcing the position of trade unions within this).

Employment rates improved after 1999 and unemployment fell to 8.7 per cent at the beginning of 2001, its lowest level since 1983.¹² However, this was largely due to a more favourable economic climate rather than to specific anti-unemployment measures. It was also evident that working-time reduction alone cannot solve France's unemployment problems. Unemployed people for whom reinsertion was easiest have disappeared into the labour market, and, while one can notice a great improvement in unemployment among young people, the hard core persists, as there are still over one million people who have been unemployed for over a year. In order to reduce this figure, it is necessary to pursue additional measures to help the weakest. For example, business journalist Lionel Steinmann has summarized proposals around five measures: a reduction in employer social security contributions, in order to lower the non-wage labour cost of less-qualified workers; allowing those on residual income support

(Revenu Minimum d'Insertion, or RMI) to take on some paid work, so as to reduce disincentives to work; real retraining for the unemployed; new measures for progressive entrance into work for young people and staged retirement for older people; increases in the variable part of salaries, to avoid wage inflation.¹³ The RPR deputy and former vice-president of the National Assembly Nicole Catala, in similar fashion, argues in favour of a reorganization of working time throughout the whole of active life:

instead of persisting with the outdated notion of the working week, it would be more beneficial to organize, in consultation with the social partners, the progressive entry of young people into active life through widely available employment training contracts, and keep older workers in part-time employment through progressive retirement, so that they can transmit their experience and knowledge.¹⁴

If the economic effects of the reforms have been mixed, what of the social effects? The reduction of working time should lead to increased leisure time and therefore improve employees' quality of life. But this first requires good working conditions. A 1999 study by the National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions (ANACT) observed that, in collective bargaining, employees were more concerned with employment issues and salaries than health and safety, and that the reduction of working time led in most cases to an intensification of work for administrative and managerial personnel, as well as for production workers.¹⁵ Instead of 'the end of work', 'endless work' became the lot of many employees, especially managers.¹⁶ Managers' working time, today, can no longer be assimilated with time spent in the workplace; they work outside the physical and temporal boundaries of the company.¹⁷ More generally, work-related stress affects all employees who are required to be flexible and responsible and meet strict targets for productivity and quality. Work intensity, load and strain increase as working time is officially being reduced, because greater flexibility and multi-tasking are required of employees, in the name of competitiveness. Employees are expected to accept flexibility to suit the company's needs: working time is reduced in slack periods, and increased in periods of intense productive or commercial activity, which avoids temporary lay-offs and overtime. Improvement in a company's productivity and competitiveness is therefore achieved through flexible working practices.

In reality, then, many employees are likely to be disappointed with the application of the 35-hour week if it means that they must work during weekends or if their pay package is reduced due to the suppression of overtime. Women, and mothers in particular, could end up even busier at home, instead of being freed by the Aubry laws, as, for many, the reduction of working time provides them with 'the opportunity to re-balance their lives, devoting more of their time to children'.¹⁸ Sociologist Rachel Silvera predicted that, on Wednesdays (a free day for French schoolchildren), 'women will do the ironing AND supervise their children's homework. They will take them to sport and leisure activities AND do the shopping.'¹⁹ The time that is freed up by the reduction of working time certainly seems to be used differently by men and women: 'Men mention hobbies, time devoted to friends and to activities with a high personal investment (DIY, gardening). Women devote more time to their home and family, while rushing around less.'²⁰ There are also fears that greater access to leisure simply aggravates existing inequalities of cultural capital: 'differences of income and cultural resources may make leisure time a greater vehicle of inequalities than working time'.²¹ The (little) freed time is perceived as personal time, time spent at home, and not as time for others, outside of one's family circle. The social commitment from workers that legislators had hoped for (social, political and cultural activism) may not occur. In short, working-time reduction appears to have reinforced rather than reduced existing inequalities.

The aim of changing society through the modernization of workplace relations forms the second social objective of the Aubry reforms, presented as 'a voluntarist reform ... as political voluntarism enables society to move forward'. According to Martine Aubry, 'For the first time, a law has been drawn up from the innovations wanted and initiated by employees and employers themselves. It is another example of the maturity of our democracy.'²² But here, too, putting ideals into practice has proved far from easy.

Employers initially strongly opposed the project, and questioned why 'similar work, similar responsibilities and similar competence should lead to different salaries', according to the size of the company.²³ Despite their objections, employers have negotiated the reduction of working time, as we have seen above, but the bargaining process has been particularly difficult in some sectors and some companies. Failure to reach agreement led to some protracted conflicts in the private sector (notably in banking, media, retail, telecommunications, energy and automobiles), and later in the public sector (hospital strikes

in 2002). A striking journalist working for the Marie-Claire group noted the irony of the situation: 'We publish articles about what women can do with the time freed up by the 35-hour week, but *we* do not profit from it.'²⁴

Even when agreements are concluded in the absence of conflict, however, one can ask to what extent they are based upon a true social compromise. Negotiation requires bargaining partners of relatively equal strength, and yet French trade unions are notoriously weak, particularly in the private sector and at workplace level. Indeed, they are absent from such a large proportion of workplaces in the private sector that it was necessary to introduce the device of employees being 'mandated' to negotiate the reduction of working time by outside trade unions in order for agreements to be signed. In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that one of the aims of the Aubry laws – that local negotiation should lead to trade union renewal – has so far failed to materialize. The process of 'mandating' employees to negotiate is supposed to give trade unions a foothold in a company they have been absent from. However, this outside influence is often seen, at best, as a one-off necessity, and at worst, as an unwelcome intrusion into the affairs of the company.²⁵ The continuing weakness of French trade unions can only render all the more difficult the establishment of a new social contract based upon a negotiated compromise acceptable to all.

The right campaigned hard in 2002 on the theme of labour market rigidities which the 35-hour-week law was claimed to have increased. Even on the left, the Aubry laws were criticized for the rigidity of their application and the unequal treatment of employees in small and large companies. For example, Bernard Brunhes, a consultant in work organization and one of the architects of the reduction of working time in 1981, argued that the Aubry laws had widely been perceived as authoritarian because of the manner of their introduction, the division and lack of unity of trade unions, and the entrenched stances of the employers.²⁶ There has been widespread dialogue on working time since 1999, but the debate on reorganization of work is often, in practice, swept under the carpet by companies which limit negotiations to hours of work in order to comply with the law. They mainly seek to avoid conflicts and an increase in their operating costs. The whole process of the 35-hour week is undoubtedly happening too rapidly, but its success or failure in the long term depends on employers who negotiated after having said that they would not, and trade unions who are too divided and not sufficiently representative.

Conclusion

The laws on the 35-hour week constitute an original political project. Although they have been criticized for excessive state interventionism, and their economic impact is contested, they represent an opportunity for companies to negotiate flexibility and to adapt their work organization to the new economy.²⁷ In return for the acceptance of greater flexibility, employees are supposed to benefit from a better balance between work and leisure through a sharing of the available jobs in the economy, and in doing so renew their ties of solidarity to the collective body. The law on the negotiated reduction of working time corresponds, according to Martine Aubry, to a real 'social project', as it is concerned with time, or the way that people organize their life, and work organization, which affects everyone in their everyday life. This social project will, however, need to take into account the social and especially the demographic evolution of France. As Jean Boissonnat underlines: 'Working time will be more and more variable. It will vary according to one's age and profession ... 35 hour yes, but until the age of 70.'²⁸

The French state is intervening directly in the life of its citizens by legislating on working time, by launching a widespread movement of social dialogue, and by creating a framework for the concrete reduction of working time. But the social compromise that underpins this can only be invented by French people themselves acting collectively: a framework for solidarity has been constructed for them, but they are called to exercise their civic responsibility in order for the ideal to become reality.

Notes

1. The idea of the 35-hour week appeared as soon as the socialists came to power in 1981. See J. Rigaudiat and Y. Baron, *Les 35 heures et l'emploi* (Paris: Pluralisme, 1983).
2. The 'Loi d'orientation et d'incitation relative à la réduction du temps de travail' (Framework Law on Reducing Working Time) of 13 June 1998 was complemented by the law on the Negotiated Reduction of Working Time adopted by the National Assembly on 15 December 1999, and modified by the Constitutional Council on 19 January 2000.
3. Figure calculated from: OFCE, *L'économie française, 2001* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), p. 117. In 1997, 25 per cent of the active population aged under 26 were unemployed; 60 per cent of 16–24s were in education but only 22 per cent of under-26s are employed. France is the country in Europe with the lowest percentage of under-26s in employment for the proportion of population in this age group.

4. For example, R. Barre's Employment Pacts in 1977, the emergency programme put in place by Chirac in 1986, the creation of jobs for young people such as the TUC (*Travaux d'Utilité Collective*), the PIL (*Programmes d'Insertion Locale*), the CES (*Contrat Emploi Solidarité*), the *Emplois-ville* or the *Contrats d'Initiative Locale*, and finally the *Emplois-Jeunes* created by the 1997 Aubry Act.
5. Gandois argues that a date for the enforcement of the 35-hour week had not been set during his talks with Jospin. He was replaced in December 1997 by Ernest-Antoine Seillière who transformed the CNPF into the Medef (*Mouvement des Entreprises de France*) the following year.
6. There is 'a deduction of the total amount of contributions paid by the employer' (Article 3, VI) for every employee concerned in the reduction of working time and for every new job created. There are additional specific financial aids for the recruitment of priority categories, such as young people, the handicapped or the long-term unemployed, and for particular companies which have a majority of low-wage employees (paid a maximum of one-and-a-half times the minimum wage). Additional financial support is given, on demand, if negotiation within the company results in an agreement achieving both a 'reduction of working time of at least 10% of the initial time' and a corresponding increase in the number of staff employed.
7. Communiqué dated 10 January 1999.
8. The 1996 Robien Law, named after its instigator, the UDF member of the National Assembly, Gilles de Robien, gave state aid to companies reducing working time by at least 10 per cent and saving or creating a number of jobs equivalent to 10 per cent of the current workforce. Again, this depended on a negotiated agreement at company level, but there was no compulsion, unlike in the Aubry Laws. At the time of the announcement of the 35-hour week by Jospin, the Robien Law had led to 1442 agreements covering 154,000 employees. The effects on employment were limited, however, with only 15,000 jobs created or saved, at considerable cost to the state. See: C. Tuchsirer, 'De la loi Robien aux 35 heures', in *L'Etat de la France, 98-99* (Paris: La Découverte, 1998), pp. 518–19; B. Boisard and B. Dalle, 'Bilan critique de la loi Robien', *Regards sur l'actualité*, 236 (December 1997), 29–40.
9. On this, see S. Milner, 'An ambiguous reform. The Jospin government and the thirty-five-hour week', *Modern and Contemporary France* (special issue on the Jospin government), 10/3 (August 2002), 339–52.
10. *Liaisons sociales: Bref social*, No. 13117, 16 March 2000.
11. See, for example, B. Fournier, O. Barrat and C. Daniel, 'Réduction du temps de travail: la négociation d'entreprise au premier semestre 2000', *Premières synthèses*, DARES, No. 172, April 2001; L. Doisneau, 'Les conventions de réduction du temps de travail de 1998 à 2000: embaucher, maintenir les rémunérations, se réorganiser', *Premières synthèses*, DARES, No. 45.2, November 2000; *Liaisons sociales. Bref social*, No. 13286, 28 November 2000.
12. L. Steinmann, in *L'Expansion*, No. 612, 6–19 January 2000, 18; *Le Monde, Supplément 'Emploi'*, 3 April 2001, p. IX; OFCE, *L'économie française*, p. 117.
13. L. Steinmann, in *Marianne*, No. 607, 21 October 1999.
14. *Libération*, 15 December 1999.
15. H. Nathan, 'Le temps des dissonances', *Libération*, 16 December 1999.

16. J. Joly, *L'Express*, 20 January 2000.
17. D. Cohen, *Nos Temps Modernes*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1999).
18. B. Grosjean, in *Libération*, 15 December 1999.
19. On 15 December 1999, *Libération* published a list of activities preferred by the French to fill the time freed up by the 35-hour week. Resting comes first, followed by children, travelling, sport, DIY, reading and music.
20. Sociologist Agnès Pitrou, quoted by B. Grosjean in *Libération*, 15 December 1999.
21. J.-L. Laville, 'Les nouveaux défis du plein-emploi', *Libération*, 2 November 1999.
22. Speech to Parliament by Martine Aubry, Minister for Employment and solidarity, on 15 December 1999, when the law on the negotiated reduction of working time was adopted: *Libération*, 15 December 1999.
23. A. Sionneau, President of the French Federation of the Building Trade, in a speech made on 4 October 1999.
24. Quoted by Nathan, 'Le temps des dissonances'.
25. C. Dufour, A. Hege, C. Vincent and M. Viprey, *Le mandatement dans le cadre de la loi du 13 juin 1998. Rapport final*, IRES, August 2000.
26. *L'Expansion*, 15 May 2000.
27. See P. Fabra, P. Artus, B. Brunhes, B. Collomb, F. Favennec and P. Lemoine, *Les 35 Heures: une approche critique* (Paris: Economica, 1999).
28. Jean Boissonnat, in *L'Expansion*, No. 605 (23 September–6 October 1999), 172.

Part Three

History and Identity

10

Wartime Deportation from France: Can the French Still Remember as a Nation?

Michael Martin

In modern France, commemoration and collective memory have always been tightly bound up with the idea of the nation-state. The past has been recalled in order to make people aware of what unites them. History and memory have been used as bonding agents, to shore up the artificial structure of that nation-state. People who have a grasp of their common heritage feel that they have a stake in the collective entity. Of course, they also need to feel that the collective entity is going somewhere, but knowing where it has been is, arguably, even more important. Ernest Renan, one of the most influential theorists of national identity, said that there were two crucial elements that form the 'soul' of the nation: one of these was the famous 'daily plebiscite' the other was 'the collective possession of a rich heritage of memories'.¹

One of the major factors in the creation and consolidation of the modern nation-state has been war. War is all about boundaries; it makes those more-or-less arbitrary lines drawn on a map seem real and important, and makes people aware that those who live within the same frontiers have something in common. States that engage in war have an obvious interest in strengthening these bonds, in order, first of all, that the war effort be supported, and then in order that the inevitable deaths be seen to have been worthwhile.

The First World War is the prime example of this model, and in France it could be taken to represent the last phase in the great nineteenth-century state-building project. After the First World War, every one of France's 36,000 towns, villages and districts erected a monument bearing the names of those who had died. No other details were given: the fact

that they 'gave their lives for France' was deemed to be sufficient. Similarly, the unknown soldier under the Arc de Triomphe is completely anonymous: we know only that he died for France.

Between 1939 and 1945 things were much more complex for the French. Only at the beginning and the end of the conflict was France engaged in anything like a classic conflict between sovereign nation-states. Consequently, there was no single, defining French experience of that period. Experiences were incredibly diverse. Any inventory would have to include Vichy officials, economic collaborators, *attentistes*, members of the different interior resistance movements, de Gaulle's Free French, deportees, prisoners of war, hostages, STO workers in Germany,² *malgré-nous* from Alsace and Lorraine, and volunteers who formed the Charlemagne division of the Waffen SS.³ And the single category of deportees, for instance, could itself be subdivided: indeed after the war there were at least six different former deportees' associations, each containing its own blend of communists, Gaullists, political prisoners, Jews, hostages and so forth.⁴

In the decades that followed the war, the fragmented nature of the French experience or experiences was considered dangerous. National unity had narrowly avoided total disintegration, and it was thought imprudent to risk rubbing salt into wounds that had not yet closed. De Gaulle pushed his theory of a 'thirty years war' against German expansionism, which allowed the framework of a classic confrontation between two nations to be extended until 1945. To this end, the soldiers who died in World War Two were simply added to the existing war memorial in each municipality. Officially, there was no fundamental difference between the two moments of *union sacrée*.

Regular army and resistance combatants were united under the banner of *la France combattante*, to whom in 1945 and in 1960, de Gaulle devoted the memorial at Mont Valérien. In November 1945, de Gaulle presided over a ceremony during which two corpses of deportees were laid to rest in the crypt at Mont Valérien. Despite the fact that resistance fighters had been in a minority among the deportees, both of the deportees inhumed at Mont Valérien were former members of the resistance. The intention was clear – to align deportation with *la France combattante*, not 'defeated France'. Of course, there was little room in this interpretation for Vichy and its misdeeds.

The complementary catch-all term 'victims of nazism' was invented for all those who had suffered in some way under German occupation, but who could not reasonably be included within the 'combatant' category. A poster of 1945 depicted a prisoner of war, a deportee and an

STO worker supporting each other, under the slogan, 'They are united: don't divide them!' (*Ils sont unis: ne les divisez pas!*) Plainly, however, this did not do justice to reality, and in recent times the story of the French collective memory of the war has largely been the story of the deconstruction of that exemplary and unifying national narrative.

This is partly because the whole idea of the nation, and of national identity, has come under pressure from different directions. With regard to war and occupation, there have been two main centrifugal forces undermining these ideas. The first is the advent of a more community-based model of collective identity (and therefore collective memory). The second force is the rise of a discourse which interprets the war and occupation in terms of human rights rather than national sovereignty.

Communitarian logic

The French Republic is in theory 'one and indivisible'. In public life there is the state and there are its citizens, and that is all. Officially, there are no communities subdividing the national entity. After the Second World War, that mental template undoubtedly made it easier for the French to incorporate umbrella terms like *la France combattante*, *la France résistante*, and *la France victime du nazisme* into their collective consciousness. However, in recent times there has been a move towards a relaxation of the rigid Jacobin model. Notably, people have become more aware of, and more willing to assert or accept, ethnic, religious, regional, gender, sexual and other differences in the public sphere. Official bodies, dealing with issues ranging from decentralization to 'parity' (gender equality in political representation) and the Pacte Civil de Solidarité (PACS) via the Islamic headscarf affair,⁵ have had to try to take account of this. Depending on one's point of view, national identity has thus been rendered more inclusive, or risks being abandoned in favour of an American-style community-based model of society.

In any case, in order to legitimize these differences in the present, the disparate groups have endeavoured to write for themselves a unique and specific history. For example, analysis of the role of women during the war years has gone hand-in-hand with the rise of feminist theory and re-evaluations of the role of women in history more generally.⁶ However, when people speak of 'communitarian logic' with regard to the history of war and occupation, they are usually thinking of French Jews, who have become less coy about asserting their

Jewishness alongside, and sometimes over and above, their Frenchness. Consequently they have been keener to draw attention to the fact that they were persecuted precisely because of that Jewishness.

Thus it is sometimes forgotten that, immediately after the war, the attitude of French Jews was completely different. Initially Jewish deportees, traumatized by their recent exclusion from the national community, were willing to be seen simply as French 'victims of nazism'. They had refused to be categorized as *déportés raciaux* (deported for reasons of race) for this same reason. Thus, forms of remembrance in the post-war decades tended to be based on a resolutely national conception of belonging. In February 1949, a plaque was unveiled on the synagogue at rue de la Victoire, in Paris. It bore the following inscription: 'In memory of our brothers in arms during the War and the Liberation, of the martyrs of the Resistance and of Deportation, as well of all the victims of nazi barbarism.'⁷ Jewish deportees were not remembered as a specific group, even on the wall of a synagogue. The Jewish victims were not alluded to directly, and 'all the victims' of nazism were lumped together. Moreover, at the unveiling ceremony, the president of the Paris Consistory, Rabbi Georges Wormser, said that 'Today, we intend to honour all those that died for her [France], irrespective of faith or belief.'⁸

In 1957 came the first signs that the global memory of deportation could be extended to take account of the 'Jewish factor'. The newly completed memorial to the unknown Jewish martyr was included in the pre-itinerary of the national Deportation Day commemoration, which takes place on the last Sunday of every April. However, remembrance of deportation was still largely controlled by Gaullists and communists, and the focal point of each Deportation Day was the *France combattante* memorial at Mont Valérien.

By the 1980s, thanks to a mini cultural renaissance begun in the 1970s, French Jews were in a position to exert more pressure, and in 1985 the Deportation Day ceremony was changed again. This time three principal 'places of memory' were designated. These were the deportation memorial on the Ile de la Cité, the Arc de Triomphe, and the memorial to the unknown Jewish martyr. At last, the specifically anti-Semitic aspect of deportation seemed to be taking its place within (or perhaps alongside) the national memory. However, one small change to a commemorative ceremony was unlikely to be enough. Serge Barcellini, head of the commemorative arm⁹ of the ex-service-men's ministry from 1981 until 1993, bemoaned the fact that the changes to the Deportation Day ceremony had failed to satisfy Jewish

deportees. According to Barcellini, the revamped commemoration turned out to be 'an insufficient response to the rise in human rights ideology and to the continuing attempt to assert a Jewish community identity'.¹⁰ Similarly, François Mitterrand is reported to have complained about the actions of a 'Jewish lobby' whose influence he described as 'powerful and damaging'.¹¹

It is true that the old motto of the Paris Consistory, *patrie et religion*, now seemed hopelessly out of step with the spirit of an age in which the nation appeared as an obsolete staging post between one's community and 'the world'. Increasingly, forms of remembrance were bypassing national or republican identities and appealing directly to a Jewish sense of common history and destiny. Shelomo Selinger's centrepiece sculpture, unveiled at the site of the former internment camp of Drancy in 1986, typified the new approach in that it contained an inscription in Hebrew as well as in French. The language of the Republic was not seen as the only appropriate means of expression. Moreover, the symbolism of the sculpture was borrowed from Jewish, not French republican, tradition: the three blocks of the monument formed the Hebrew letter 'Schin', inscribed above the doorway of Jewish homes; the cube shape on the head of the central figure represented the 'téfilin', the Jewish symbol of prayer; and the ten stylized figures composing the sculpture made up the number required for 'minyan', or collective prayer.¹²

French responsibility

As a specific and assertive Jewish memory developed in France, then, it gradually gave itself a solid objective: to obtain from the French state some sort of official acknowledgement of responsibility for the crimes perpetrated as a result of the policy of collaboration with the nazis. There was a growing tendency for Jews to see themselves not as French victims, but as victims of France. By the early 1990s, Jewish groups had the capacity to mobilize public opinion to that cause. When, in the run-up to the fiftieth anniversary of the 'rafle du Vél' d'hiv' in July 1992,¹³ a petition was published in *Le Monde* demanding that Mitterrand apologize on behalf of France, the president found himself in a delicate situation. Mitterrand, like all of his predecessors, believed firmly that it was unfair, and potentially dangerous, to hold the Republic in any way responsible for misdeeds committed under an 'illegitimate' regime dedicated to destroying republican ideals. He declared that the Republic 'has nothing to do with that' and moreover

that 'neither is France responsible'.¹⁴ He reiterated in November 1992 that 'the French nation was not involved in the sorry venture' of Vichy.¹⁵

It was a sign of the times that, far from gaining bonus points for defending the good name of the nation and the Republic, Mitterrand came to regard the 'Vél' d'hiv' affair' as a public relations disaster. When he attended the fiftieth anniversary commemoration, he was jeered by a section of the audience, and there were even shouts of 'Mitterrand à Vichy'. He decided that something had to be done, and in February 1993 a new day of commemoration was proclaimed by presidential decree. This was the first time a national commemoration had ever been established in this way.

Under the terms of the decree, the new commemoration was to be known as the 'National remembrance day for racial and anti-Semitic persecutions committed under the de facto authority known as the "government of the French State".' The official title was significant in two ways. First of all it linked the French state to anti-Semitic persecutions, thus doing away with a double-edged tradition of blaming 'nazi barbarism' or 'the enemy' for everything and at the same time neglecting to mention that much of the persecution was purely anti-Semitic, rather than anti-French, in character.

If that aspect was something of a departure from tradition, Mitterrand stuck resolutely to his position on the legitimacy of the Vichy government. Hence the term 'de facto authority': the French state could not claim to properly represent France, whose true form of government was republican. So, like so many of Mitterrand's initiatives, the new day of commemoration was paradoxical: in one sense Mitterrand had not moved from his original position, that Vichy had nothing to do with 'the real France'. On the other hand he was implicitly accepting a degree of responsibility, since the French Republic was constrained by decree to commemorate the crimes of the French state. Yet the precise nature of that responsibility remained unclear. Roger Jouet, who had taken over from Serge Barcellini at the ex-servicemen's ministry, was quick to point out that 'the crimes committed by certain French people during the occupation *in no way imply any collective responsibility*' (emphasis added).¹⁶

In its follow-up petition, which appeared in *Le Monde* on 19 July 1992, the 'Vél' d'hiv' committee' had called for a commemoration of the crimes and persecutions perpetrated by the Vichy government. Jean Le Garrec, the deputy who sponsored the initial bill, had retained the preposition 'by'.¹⁷ However, when the bill became a presidential

decree, the preposition 'by' had been replaced by 'under' (*par* and *sous* in French). This gave Vichy the benefit of a measure of indulgent ambiguity. The crimes had still been committed, and Vichy was still implicated, but the link between the two became more tenuous. Did the Vichy government actively contribute to the crimes and persecutions, or was it merely 'in charge' at the time?

It was only when Mitterrand had been replaced by Jacques Chirac as president of the Republic that the remaining ambiguities were officially removed. Once again the 'Vél' d'hiv' anniversary was the platform. In his speech on 16 July 1995, Chirac assumed unequivocally, on behalf of France, collective responsibility for the anti-Semitic crimes of Vichy. In doing so, he was consciously drawing a line under the uneasy compromise that he had inherited. Chirac recognized that it was France that had 'handed those under its protection to their executioners'.¹⁸ And he was unambiguous when he said that 'the criminal madness of the occupier was aided by French people, aided by the French State'.¹⁹ With these words he put paid to the idea that Vichy was some aberrant un-French entity which somehow managed to oust the 'real' France for a time; and he officially banished the Gaullian dogma by which France, or at least the only 'France' that mattered, was more or less united in its resistance to foreign occupation despite the treachery of the bureaucratic elite.

Chirac's speech was in part a reaction to the decisive shift in the public mood which followed the Mitterrand-Vél' d'hiv' controversy, and his judgement was vindicated by an IFOP poll published on 27 July 1995.²⁰ Of those questioned, 72 per cent agreed with the president's position. Given the state of mainstream opinion, criticism of Chirac's speech was generally muted. Perhaps the RPR news sheet *Lettre de la Nation* was most eloquent, if not in the way it intended. It praised the president for his 'plain speaking' which compared favourably with the 'obfuscation' of the Mitterrand era, but it then proceeded to neglect the incriminating part of the speech and concentrate on its more positive – but obviously less significant – aspects, such as the public indignation aroused by the arrests of 1942.

The reasons for divergences in responses to the problem of French responsibility for Vichy were not only moral, political and tactical, but generational. Jacques Chirac was the first president belonging to the post-war generation who was too young to have been involved in the politics of that era. (Giscard d'Estaing, although only a teenager during the war, came from a strongly Vichyite family, and can hardly be considered untainted.) Chirac did not share the defensiveness of the war

generation, and was less ill at ease with the notion of France as a guilty party, even if that guilt still had to be qualified with reference to the exceptional context and the many mitigating factors.

Although in the ministerial ranks of the RPR few voices were raised against him at the time, it was understood that some were upset by this implicit repudiation of the traditional Gaullian line.²¹ It was ironic, indeed, that the first Gaullist president for two decades should also be the first to unequivocally reject one of the myths on which much of the Gaullist edifice had been built. The extreme-right journal *Minute*, comparing the respective attitudes of Mitterrand and Chirac, remarked that the socialist was much more Gaullist than the Gaullist in this respect.²² Two of Chirac's former advisers, Marie-France Garaud and Pierre Juillet, claimed that, in accepting that Vichy acted in the name of France, he was 'outlawing' de Gaulle and 'legitimizing' his condemnation for treason. And implicitly, Chirac was indeed acknowledging that de Gaulle was an outlaw at first: the government that deemed him so had been voted in by the people's representatives, and there were no protests in support of the rebel general at the time. What, then, was to prevent Vichy claiming to speak and act 'in the name of France'?²³

Philippe Séguin, having kept his counsel for two years, went public with his dismay during the Maurice Papon trial of 1997. He was concerned that, in seeking to blame the Republic for the crimes committed by Vichy, certain groups were attacking the memory of Charles de Gaulle, indulging a perverse taste for 'self-abasement', and playing into the hands of the *Front national* by promoting the 'degradation' of France. Yet like Garaud and Juillet, and many others before them, Séguin managed to confuse Nation and Republic, seeing an acceptance of blame on behalf of the former as calumny towards the latter. Yet, outside of the extreme right, no one seriously suggested that the Republic was to blame for the crimes of Vichy, even if the Third Republic did dissolve itself too meekly. In asking incredulously, 'How can one claim that the State of Vichy embodied the Republic?' Garaud and Juillet were being disingenuous. They sought to reshape Chirac's declaration into a more vulnerable form so that it could be denounced more readily.²⁴

The parliamentary left, in the form of Lionel Jospin and Robert Hue, approved the declaration. Also, Jospin has subsequently endorsed Chirac's declaration in his prime ministerial capacity. Jean-Noël Jeanneney was one of the few centre-left figures to voice criticism at the time. Jeanneney took exception to Chirac's presuming to accuse

'France'.²⁵ Associations of former resisters, soldiers, prisoners of war and deportees²⁶ were unhappy at the initiative for the same reason.

The criticisms voiced by Kofi Yamgnane, head of the Foundation for Republican Integration and former minister for 'integration' under Mitterrand, bring us back to the problem arising from tension between a national memory and community-orientated memories. Yamgnane complained that Chirac's words had struck another blow for communitarianism, and jeopardized the indivisibility of the Republic. The basis of his criticism was that, in making the apology to a specific ethnic group within the French nation, Jacques Chirac had recognized the existence of a 'Jewish community', thus implicitly undermining 'the founding principal of the French model of Republican integration', which makes a point of treating the individual as a French citizen, not as a member of any sub-community.²⁷ The impasse is not easily negotiable: in seeking to denounce, among other sins, Vichy's malicious flouting of the republican tradition of civic – as opposed to ethnic – nationality, the president is himself accused of betraying that tradition by pandering to community lobbies.

As always with regard to race-related issues, critics had to be circumspect to avoid playing into the hands of the *Front national*. For over on the extreme right, Jean-Marie Le Pen was voicing his opinions bullishly. The FN leader was indignant that the new president had dared 'sully the nation and its memory' in such a way, and put it down to an 'electoral debt' payable to the Jewish community.²⁸ Chirac had made doubly sure that the extreme right would be upset, by attacking its ideologies in his declaration:

When, on our doorstep, certain small groups, certain publications, certain teachings, certain political parties reveal themselves to be carriers of a xenophobic, racist, anti-Semitic ideology, then that spirit of vigilance that drives you, that drives us must manifest itself with the greatest force.²⁹

The immediate impact of Chirac's declaration was symbolic: the French nation had accepted that it could not deny all responsibility for what occurred under the German occupation, in particular with regard to the Jews. But the declaration also had practical implications. French Jewish families who had been despoiled at this time now had a reasonable case for demanding some form of material compensation from the French state. In February 1997, Prime Minister Alain Juppé commissioned a report whose aims would be to establish the nature of the

despoilment of Jews living in France during the occupation, and to make recommendations regarding any damages to be awarded. The 'mission' was headed by Jean Mattéoli, a former resistance deportee. His interim report of 8 January 1998 gave notice of the extent to which responsibilities had been officially recognized. Mattéoli wrote that his aim was to:

Study the conditions under which goods belonging to persons considered to be Jewish by the occupier and the Vichy authorities were confiscated, or generally acquired by fraud, violence or theft under the *anti-Semitic policy which ravaged France* between 1940 and 1944. (Emphasis added)³⁰

Here we find that the French government of Vichy is clearly designated as a guilty party, and also that the anti-Semitic nature of the crimes is not obscured. Nevertheless, the report makes it plain that the term 'Jew' is only symbolic. Under French law there was no basis for categorizing any person or persons in such a way. The discriminatory legal definition employed by Vichy had been abolished at the liberation. The report explains that, 'the Mission rigorously studies the conditions of the despoliation, not of the Jews of France, but of persons considered to be Jewish by the occupier and the Vichy authorities'.³¹ Once again, the theme of communities within an indivisible Republic reappears. While the French authorities were now willing to be more specific than ever in identifying the real victims and malefactors of the occupation, and were willing to assume the financial consequences, they had to remain extremely circumspect when it came to placing people in categories defined by their race or religion.

Human rights

The problem of French guilt or otherwise is inseparable from the issue of human rights, which has begun to dominate debate over occupation and collaboration. Yet during the occupation the problem of the rights of individuals and minorities was seldom broached. The London Free French, on behalf of whom René Cassin broadcast regularly on the BBC, only alluded to Vichy's anti-Jewish policies for the first time in 1941. Even then, the message of solidarity was only addressed to fellow French nationals, the 'French Israelites'; there was no mention of non-French Jews, and no call to resist the anti-Jewish measures. The main thrust of the message was to assure the Jewish population that 'the

French people are not responsible for the measures' taken against it.³² Even when it became abundantly clear that the Jews of France were being deported and murdered, the resistance, like the allies, did not change its priority, which was military defeat of Germany. None of the 85 convoys that left France for the east between March 1942 and August 1944 was ever attacked or sabotaged.³³ And there were even some resistance movements, such as that led by Henri Frenay, which approved of the anti-Semitism of the French State, but disapproved of the policy of collaboration.³⁴ Another resistance group, the *Organisation civile et militaire*, produced a pamphlet in June 1942 in which it advocated stopping all Jewish immigration to France.³⁵

Of the 350 or so pages that constituted Pétain's 'dossier' during his trial (for treason, not for crimes against humanity) only four related to specifically anti-Jewish activities; also, in the archives of the French State there are very few documents relating to the 'Jewish question'.³⁶ Asher Cohen, having analysed the pro-Vichy press, concluded that, even in that context, Judaism and the Jews was far from being one of the principal themes.³⁷

While no one in France had ever claimed that human rights were irrelevant to war and occupation, the theme had not been prominent in official and collective memory in the post-war decades. As we have seen, the Gaullian framework for understanding that period was concerned mainly with the nation and its territorial, political and moral integrity. Vichy was regarded as criminal because it had betrayed France by negotiating the armistice of 1940 and subsequently collaborating with the occupying forces. Collective forms of remembrance were considered to be in the service of national unity and identity. Therefore there was little encouragement for initiatives that might serve an alternative ideology setting human rights above national identity. There were extrinsic reasons for the reticence, also: human rights were an awkward subject while France still refused the right of peoples to self-determination in the colonies, and carried out torture in Algeria.

The arrival of the left in power, with a more overtly human rights-based ideology, can be seen as a turning point. Despite its claim to be the 'country of human rights', it was only after the socialist victory of 1981 that France finally ratified the European convention safeguarding 'human rights and fundamental dignities'.³⁸ François Mitterrand declared in 1986 that 'Human rights ... are at the centre of everything.'³⁹ This ushered in a period in which the rhetoric of human rights was extended to many different domains of public life in France. Often, the human rights discourse took the form of a preoccupation

with racism and anti-Semitism. This preoccupation was in part a reaction to the xenophobic outpourings of the *Front national*, which could hardly be ignored. The 'racism-anti-Semitism' rubric in the index to *Le Monde* expanded from a small section of one column in 1981 to almost a full page of three full columns by the mid-1980s.

However, this does not mean that the nation was suddenly abandoned altogether as a frame of reference. Debate in the National Assembly on the restoration of the 8 May national holiday, in September 1981, is revealing in this respect. The old narrative, telling of a nation's heroism triumphing over the evils of nazism, was still to the fore. Alain Hautecour, sponsoring the law, declared that 'this celebration is that of liberty regained, this victory is that of the whole nation over the dictator and nazi barbarism', while the secretary of state for ex-servicemen, Jean Laurain, concurred: 'May 8 symbolizes the will of the French people, joined together in the spirit of the Resistance.'⁴⁰ If the French account of the war years had taken on a more universalist tenor, it had not yet lost confidence in the nation's essential qualities. Vichy's crimes, in short, were not yet central to that account.

Eleven years later, in 1992, the National Assembly was again discussing war and occupation, but the tone was rather different. In the wake of the Vél' d'hiv' affair, representatives discussed how best to commemorate persecutions committed during the period of collaboration.⁴¹ Serge Barcellini has undertaken a comparative analysis of the 1981 and 1992 debates, and sees them as indicative of the change in emphasis that was taking place.⁴² Of course, the subject matter was not the same in each case, but this is in itself significant. In 1981, the terms 'nazi', 'Hitlerian' and 'national-socialist' appeared eighteen times in total; 'Vichy' was alluded to twice, and 'Pétain' was not mentioned. During the debate held in 1992, the terms 'Vichy', 'French State' and 'Pétain' occurred twenty times, with 'nazi' and 'German' appearing only six times.

Since 1981, most of the changes in collective memory have conformed to this pattern. We have already seen how, from the Vél' d'hiv' to the Mattéoli commission, national prestige had to bend to pressure from individuals and communities. Whereas Pétain and his cohorts were tried for treason, Touvier and Papon were tried for 'crimes against humanity', an offence that is now on the French statute books (thanks in no small measure to the efforts of François Mitterrand). Every year since 1989, the war memorial complex at Caen, one of whose objectives is 'the defence of human rights' has organized an 'International

competition of speeches in defence of human rights', which enables lawyers from all over the world to come and denounce current human rights violations. In October 1992, a conference was held in Lyon on the theme of 'Resistance and Memory, from Auschwitz to Sarajevo'. Three of the papers given dealt with the subject of human rights.⁴³

In 1992, Noël Copin, in an editorial for *La Croix*, could state explicitly that 'the failing of the Vichy government was less the acceptance of defeat to enemy armies than the *moral capitulation* to nazi ideology'.⁴⁴ War, in other words, was not about military confrontation in defence of national sovereignty, but about universally applicable ethical standards. An opinion poll in *Le Figaro-Magazine* in December 1994 ranked the reasons people had for reproaching Vichy. The most popular reproach, with 57 per cent, was the policy of rounding up Jews. The policy of collaboration with the Germans was cited by 56 per cent of those polled. Then came another anti-Semitic policy, that of the *statut juif* of October 1940. It was chosen by 52 per cent of those polled. Further behind was the creation of the *milice* (the Vichy militia), with 36 per cent. But the act which made this all possible, the abolition of the Third Republic, was by far the least commonly held reproach, gathering only 11 per cent of opinion.⁴⁵ 'Vichy' had come to signify 'anti-Semitism' to the exclusion of those aspects previously deemed important.⁴⁶ As Philippe Burrin has observed, 'in a sense, we have gone from a regime guilty of having harmed a collective person, France, to a regime guilty of having harmed human rights'.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Without wishing to be over simplistic, it is clear that the French official and collective memory of war and occupation has changed significantly in the last half century. What is interesting is that the most important changes are a result not, primarily, of new facts coming to light, but of the erosion of a traditional model of national identity. That unified model finally proved to be incapable of dealing with an impossibly fragmented and divisive experience that cut across national boundaries. It was inevitable that de Gaulle's 'certain idea of France' would be superseded by an alternative framework for understanding what happened in France during the war, and for understanding war in general.

Indeed one could argue that the Kosovo war in the late 1990s finally dissolved the centuries-old partnership between war and national sovereignty. Before and during that conflict, the reservations of

'sovereignists' like Régis Debray, Jean-Pierre Chevènement and Charles Pasqua were disregarded by political and popular opinion. Their arguments – that no one has the right to intervene in squabbles between communities within a sovereign state, and that war should only be fought to defend the national interest – were rejected. The Second World War was invoked by both sides in the argument, but in the end that argument was won by those who saw the conflict in terms of ethics and the rights of minorities within the nation-state, not by those who saw it in terms of national sovereignty. More recently, Kofi Annan, the head of the United Nations, dealt another blow to national sovereignty as a guiding principle. On 20 September 1999, he declared that 'the sovereignty of states is being redefined by the forces of globalisation and international co-operation'.⁴⁸ In politics and economics, in the prosecution of war and in its remembrance, the rules were changing. In 1992, the indefatigable memorial activist Serge Klarsfeld gave a lecture at the 'Resistance and Memory' conference in Lyon. The title of his paper, 'Memory without Frontiers', provided a succinct statement of the new order.⁴⁹

Notes

1. E. Renan, *Œuvres complètes*, 1 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947), p. 904. Editor's translation.
2. Between June 1942 and July 1944, 732,626 workers went off to Germany under the *Service du travail obligatoire*.
3. Around 7000 Frenchmen fall into this last category. Jacques Doriot, notably, won the Iron Cross for his bravery on the Eastern Front.
4. These were the FNDIRP (*Fédération nationale des déportés et internés, résistants et patriotes*), the FNDIR (*Fédération nationale des déportés internés de la Résistance*), the UNADIF (*Union nationale des associations de déportés et d'internés et familles*), the FIAP (*Fédération internationale des anciens prisonniers politiques*), the ANFROM (*Association nationale des familles de résistants et otages morts pour la France*) and the ADIR (*Association des déportées internées de la Résistance*).
5. The wearing of the Islamic headscarf became a source of tension and was seen as a challenge to the republican ethos of the secular school in the 1990s. The first case occurred in Creil in 1989 when three Islamic girls were excluded from school for wearing ostentatious religious symbols. The courts have since ruled that Muslim girls have the right to wear headscarves if they wish. (See Hugh Starkey, Chapter 7.)
6. In *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7/1 (1999), Claire Gorrara and Hannah Diamond talked of 'Gendering the Occupation of France' (pp. 7–9), and endorsed an approach incorporating the 'study of gender relations, constructions of masculinity and femininity and the structuring role of discourse in generating positions for men and women in French wartime

- society' (p. 7). They affirmed that 'the history of gender and the Occupation is starting to be written' (p. 9).
7. S. Barcellini, 'Sur deux journées nationales commémorant la déportation et les persécutions des "années noires"', *Vingtième Siècle*, 45 (1995). Editor's translation.
 8. Annette Wieviorka, *Déportation et génocides. Entre la mémoire et l'oubli* (Paris: Pion, 1992), p. 403. Editor's translation.
 9. The *Délégation à la mémoire et à l'information historique* (Department for Memory and Historical Information) was the most durable name of this service.
 10. Barcellini, 'Sur deux journées nationales'. Editor's translation.
 11. Extract from Jean d'Ormesson, *Le Rapport Gabriel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999), in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 26 August–1 September 1999. Editor's translation.
 12. Explained by Selinger on website of the *Conservatoire Historique du camp de Drancy* (<http://www.chez.com/campdrancy/>).
 13. More than 13,000 Jewish men, women and children were arrested and taken to the Vélodrome d'hiver in the 15th arrondissement of Paris. Most were then transferred to internment camps before being deported and murdered.
 14. Television interview of 13 September 1994. Quoted by Nathan Bracher, 'Mitterrand and the lessons of history', *Contemporary French Civilisation*, 19/2 (1995). Editor's translation.
 15. On *Radio J*, November 1992 (*Le Monde*, 5 February 1993).
 16. In the editorial of the newsletter of the *Délégation à la mémoire et à l'information historique*, *Les Chemins de la mémoire*, No. 31 (July–September 1993). Editor's translation.
 17. Barcellini, 'Sur deux journées nationales'.
 18. *Le Monde*, 18 July 1995. Editor's translation.
 19. Ibid.
 20. In *L'Événement du jeudi*.
 21. In private, prominent Gaullists such as Jean-Jacques de Bresson and Pierre Lefranc have also criticized Chirac's declaration.
 22. 19 July 1995.
 23. Marie-France Garaud and Pierre Juillet in *Le Monde*, 22 July 1995.
 24. *Le Monde*, 22 July 1995. Editor's translation.
 25. *Le Monde*, 20 July 1995.
 26. For instance M. Voutey, vice-president of the *Fédération Nationale des Déportés et Internés, Résistants et Patriotes* (interview of 23 March 1999).
 27. *Le Monde*, 14 August 1995. Editor's translation.
 28. *Le Monde*, 20 July 1995. Others, such as Elysée counsellor Jean Kahn, have said the same off the record. One of Jean-Marie Le Pen's pet theories was that Chirac was 'controlled' by influential Jewish groups. He is quoted in *Le Monde* of 2–3 March 1997 as saying that Chirac 'is respecting the promise made to Bnai Brith and to all the other Jewish organisations: to not call into question the sharing-out of the spoils established at the Liberation'. Editor's translation.
 29. *Le Monde*, 18 July 1995.
 30. *La Documentation française* website. The second part of the report was handed in on 14 July 1999. The mission's work is still ongoing.

31. Ibid.
32. Asher Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetages: Juifs et Français sous L'Occupation et sous Vichy* (Paris: les Editions du Cerf, 1993), pp. 204–5.
33. André Kaspi in *Pardès*, 16 (1992).
34. Conan and Lindenberg in *Esprit*, 198 (January–April 1994).
35. Mentioned by H. Rouso, 'Où en est l'histoire de la Résistance', *L'Histoire*, 41 (January 1982).
36. Denis Peschanski, *Vichy 1940–1944: Contrôle et exclusion* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1997), p. 172.
37. Cohen, op. cit. (R. Rémond's introduction).
38. Alfred Grosser, *Les identités difficiles* (Paris: Presses de Sciences-Po, 1996), p. 100.
39. M. Martin-Roland, *Il faut laisser le temps au temps. Les mots de François Mitterrand* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1995), p. 29. Editor's translation.
40. Barcellini, op. cit. Editor's translation.
41. This subsequently became the presidential decree mentioned above.
42. Barcellini, op. cit.
43. E. Malet (ed.), *Resistance et mémoire, d'Auschwitz à Sarajevo. Actes du colloque de Lyon, octobre 1992* (Paris: Hachette, 1993).
44. 14 July 1992. Editor's translation.
45. Poll referred to in C. Flood and H. Frey, 'The Vichy Syndrome revisited', *Contemporary French Civilisation*, 19/2 (1995), 246.
46. H. Amouroux, *La page n'est pas encore tournée* (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1993), p. 12.
47. In P. Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de mémoire, Vol. III, Les France, 1. Conflits et partages* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), p. 342.
48. Reported in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 September–6 October 1999. Editor's translation.
49. Malet, op. cit.

11

Facing the Past: French Wartime Memories at the Millennium

Hanna Diamond and Claire Gorrara

More than almost any other aspect of French twentieth-century history, the resistance has symbolized a set of democratic and liberal values which constitute the bedrock of French post-war identity. Yet in the 1990s, this heroic story of a national uprising against the forces of nazism was challenged. The war record of prominent resistance activists, such as Raymond and Lucie Aubrac, came under increasing attack.¹ Both in the courtroom and in the pages of major newspapers, the lives and actions of resistance heroes, dead and alive, were contested in ways that point to the very dissolution of the Gaullist myth of *la France résistante*. In this chapter, we shall explore the shifting politics of memory by looking at the impact of two wartime figures on current debates over the legacy of France's wartime past: Jean Moulin, the iconic figure of Gaullist resistance, and Maurice Papon, the former Vichy civil servant who was successfully prosecuted for complicity in crimes against humanity in 1998.

Their occupation itineraries could not be more divergent but their appearance on the French scene in the late 1990s has formed part of a general re-evaluation of the political certainties that underpinned a Gaullist interpretation of France's past. Although this is by no means a recent phenomenon, the period since the 1990s has been unprecedented in recent French history for highlighting the historical and ideological collapse of received interpretations of France's wartime past; the stories of Moulin and Papon form part of this ongoing process.

The Gaullist myth

In 1945, in the interests of national unity, those who believed that legitimacy in the Republic was determined by participation in the

resistance offered the following interpretation of resistance to the French people. The French resistance was a heroic struggle and many French men and women died at the hands of the Germans. It began in 1940, when de Gaulle established his legitimacy and leadership of the resistance with his appeal to his compatriots to continue the fight against the German occupying forces on the 18 June. According to this account, resisters fought Pétain and his policies from the outset. Though active resisters may have been in a minority, they were only able to operate because of the tacit agreement and support of the nation as a whole. Eventually, the resistance as a movement gained support to become a decisive and threatening force to the Germans, and French people increasingly rallied to the Gaullist cause as symbolized by the figure of Jean Moulin. Finally, the well-publicized image of de Gaulle striding down the Champs-Élysées became the defining image of the liberation of France, legitimizing the role of the French resistance in the allied war effort.

The initial published accounts of the resistance by historical actors established this Gaullist interpretation. They enabled many French people to feel that they had participated in the resistance in some way, and in turn gave them a chance to move on from the events of the war and the occupation. However, this version glossed over the realities of other events of the occupation, such as the persecution of Jews living in France and varying degrees of collaboration, in order to have a cathartic and unifying influence. Other narratives of France's wartime experiences also competed for public attention, notably a communist perspective on the period that emphasized the sacrifice of Communist Party members, the legendary 75,000 shot by the Germans in the fight against fascism.

According to Henry Rousso, the pre-eminent historian of memory, these accounts should be interpreted as the first in a series of stages collectively labelled the 'Vichy syndrome'.² Rousso identified the first ten years after the Liberation (1944–54) as a period largely given over to grieving. During these years, France confronted conflicting interpretations of its war record, which were further problematized by post-war purges and subsequent rounds of amnesties. Even so, for Rousso, the dominant interpretation of the war years for the subsequent two decades (1954–71) was a Gaullist version of events which its opponents labelled *résistancialisme*. This mythical reworking of the war period had three notable consequences. Firstly, it marginalized the Vichy regime in the history of the period, underplaying the most negative aspects of its hold over French society. Secondly, it led to the veneration and

celebration of the 'resistance' by Gaullists and communists way beyond the circles of those actually involved. Lastly, it enabled the identification of the nation with a largely Gaullist resistance, thereby creating a 'national' memory of the war years that failed to acknowledge individual and collective guilt and responsibility for the darker side of France's war record.

Jean Moulin: the heroic resister?

It was with the marked intention of reinforcing and consolidating this Gaullist narrative that, in 1964, de Gaulle and André Malraux stage-managed the transfer of Jean Moulin's remains to the Panthéon, the traditional resting place of republican heroes. Raised to the level of national hero, Moulin had attained an iconic status in the resistance; he had become not just a leader figure but also a model for all Frenchmen to follow. Moulin's fame and reputation were predicated on the circumstances of his death and the place he occupied in a Gaullist version of wartime events. Presented as a skilled negotiator, Moulin, who operated under the code name 'Max', had been sent as de Gaulle's emissary to coordinate the unification of disparate internal resistance movements in France in 1943. Yet he and other key players in the French resistance were betrayed as they came together to meet at the surgery of Dr Dugoujon in Caluire on 21 June 1943. Minutes after Max's arrival at the rendezvous with two other colleagues, a *Sonderkommando* raided the surgery. The regional head of the Gestapo, Klaus Barbie, interrogated the men arrested, and at some time after this Jean Moulin is thought to have died but nobody knows when or how or where. It is generally believed that he died as a hero who refused to talk. Many accounts of these events have since sought to undercover the 'truth'.

It was not until the early 1970s that Moulin's reputation as the incarnation of resistance values came seriously under attack. This was the period that Rousso has defined as the 'broken mirror' phase (1971–74) when many of the myths or legends of the war years so pivotal to post-war French reconstruction were under pressure from internal and external forces.³ In the case of Moulin, what had long been bubbling under the surface erupted, namely the discontent of other resisters who felt his monumental status had been used to underplay their own contribution to national liberation. Prominent amongst these voices was Henri Frenay, the co-founder, along with Bertie Albrecht, of Combat, a Resistance movement that was the

largest and most effective in the southern zone. With the publication of his memoirs *La Nuit Finira* in 1973, Frenay made it known that he had been opposed to the joint organization of the resistance coordinated by Moulin on de Gaulle's behalf. He expressed his view that the unification of the internal resistance and the political aims which accompanied it had not originated with grassroots activists. He even went one stage further to suggest that Moulin was in fact a crypto-communist, later publishing *L'Enigme Jean Moulin* (1977), which was entirely devoted to developing this idea.⁴ Frenay clearly perceived Moulin to be an interloper who had disrupted the established power bases of the resistance. In the 1970s, Moulin's memory and reputation, therefore, became one vantage point from which fellow resisters could vent their discontent at the outcomes of the post-war political realignments and the dominance of a Gaullist reading of events.

By the 1980s, as the legacy of the war years reached a period of 'obsession' in the view of Henry Rousso,⁵ Moulin's reputation and memory were to filter into another major arena for the reconfiguration of French wartime memory: the courtroom. Klaus Barbie, was put on trial for crimes against humanity in Lyon in 1987, and promised to expose those who had betrayed Moulin to the Gestapo in June 1943. In a skilful reversal of expectation, Barbie and his lawyer, Jacques Vergès, declared their intention to conduct a counter trial of the French resistance, uncovering the corruption and betrayal that they claimed had decimated its ranks and led to Moulin's arrest. Revelations were promised over Moulin's arrest and murder but were never forthcoming, although a whispering campaign was started centring on the activities of the well-known Gaullists Raymond and Lucie Aubrac, questioning their allegiances. The publication of Gérard Chauvy's *Aubrac: Lyon 1943* reignited this debate with the inclusion of the so-called Barbie memoirs, which accused the Aubracs of being double agents in the pay of the Gestapo.⁶ This allegation was to lead ultimately to a disastrous round table discussion at the headquarters of the French daily newspaper, *Libération*, in May 1997, when the aged resisters were obliged to justify their wartime actions to a committee of sometimes hostile historians.⁷ With the Aubrac controversy, the image of the Gaullist resistance as the war conscience of the nation had been damaged. It was becoming increasingly clear that France as a nation needed to face up to a far more complex picture of individual and collective guilt and responsibility than that allowed for by an emphasis on heroic resistance.

The controversies surrounding Moulin's political allegiances entered a new phase with the publication of voluminous works in the late 1990s that attempted to unravel the mystery surrounding Jean Moulin and his contribution to French post-war reconstruction. The dramatic and mysterious circumstances of Moulin's death resurfaced to whet a public appetite for yet more scandal on the war years and the reputations of post-war political figures. After revelations in 1994 over the nature and duration of François Mitterrand's commitment to the Vichy regime as a civil servant, came searching examinations of Jean Moulin's wartime allegiances. Was he committed to de Gaulle or was this no more than a cover for his communist ideals? Was he in fact planning to move over to the American camp? How did the Germans come to know of his whereabouts, and was a double agent involved in the operation to capture Max?

Daniel Cordier, Jean Moulin's secretary turned historian, embarked on a monumental biography, volumes of which appeared in 1989, 1993 and 1999.⁸ With newly unearthed documentary evidence, Cordier defended his former superior from the renewed allegations of communist sympathies advanced by Thierry Wolton in *Le Grand Recrutement* (1993).⁹ Wolton followed on from Frenay in the 1970s, claiming that Moulin and his associates were in fact direct agents of the Soviet state, an allegation that was bound, even designed, to create a media stir. Alongside the 'communist conspiracy' theory of Moulin's life was the diametrically opposed interpretation presented by Jacques Baynac in *Les Secrets de l'affaire Moulin* (1998) that Moulin's real wartime links were not with the Russians but the Americans.¹⁰ According to Baynac, Moulin planned to break with de Gaulle and organize a counter-bid for the resistance with the support of the Americans and General Giraud, the puppet leader they wished to instate as the prospective leader of France. Perhaps the most sensationalist perspective on Moulin's story in the late 1990s was that advanced by Pierre Péan in *La Diabolique de Caluire* (1999) which reread Moulin's arrest in the familiar terms of the spy thriller, with René Hardy, the man many believed betrayed Moulin to the Gestapo, led astray by his beautiful and seductive mistress, Lydie Bastien.¹¹

Although some important archival material has been uncovered to shed extra light on the circumstances of Moulin's death, particularly in Baynac's work, it still remains that the majority of recent Moulin studies have repackaged information already very much in the public domain.¹² Either casting Moulin as the darling of the Gaullists, the potential communist traitor or as plotting to side with the Americans,

they have all attempted to appropriate the figure of Moulin to suit different group interests and interpretations of the war years. What does this treatment of Moulin's memory indicate about the current state of French attitudes towards its wartime past?

Firstly, it shows that the hegemonic position of a Gaullist vision of the past has been largely eroded. Moulin, as the iconic figure representing the martyrdom of the French people, has been reinterpreted as an idol with feet of clay, for no one person can stand in metonymically for the war experiences of the nation. Moulin as the contested hero certainly suits the mood of the day as historians of France look set to examine the complex interaction of the individual with the collective forces of their time, eschewing either a purely 'intentionalist' or 'structuralist' version of wartime developments. Secondly, it suggests that another round of demystifications looks set to continue into the twenty-first century in France. With the collapse of communism post-1989 and fraught investigations into the impact of fascism, communism and national socialism on twentieth-century history, France and other nations have looked to other models to conceptualize their recent past. In this book, Michael Martin rightly points to the influence of a human-rights based agenda,¹³ exemplified in the current era by the existence of the war crimes tribunal at the Hague. Yet to what extent can the courtroom provide an appropriate forum for a nation to confront its past? This and other issues were highlighted by the debates surrounding the trial of Maurice Papon.

Maurice Papon: the shameful collaborator?

Between October 1997 and April 1998, Maurice Papon was tried for crimes against humanity for his role in the arrest, detention and deportation of eight convoys of Jews from the Bordeaux area between 1942 and 1944. As a high-ranking civil servant working for the Gironde prefecture, from 1942 Papon was given responsibility for supervising and enacting Vichy legislation concerning Jews. His trial, after sixteen years of legal disputes and delays, was partly the culmination of a campaign by civil parties and historians to assess not only one man's wartime career but also Vichy, and thereby French state, responsibility and involvement in the Final Solution. Papon's six-month trial was, therefore, the subject of intense media scrutiny. Broadsheets, such as *Le Monde*, had daily chronicles and special websites which were updated regularly. They drew on the expertise of eminent historians to write opinion columns and summaries of the issues central to the trial: how

much did Papon know about the Final Solution and what part did he play in it as a Vichy civil servant? How far could he be held personally responsible?¹⁴

It would be no exaggeration to say that for a good number of French people their understanding of the historical context vital to the Papon trial was gleaned largely from the newspaper and magazine reports they read at the time. In stark contrast to the glorious narratives of a Gaullist vision of resistance was substituted another darker and more sinister perspective on France's wartime past: collaboration in some of the worst atrocities committed on French soil during the twentieth century.¹⁵ Eventually sentenced to ten years in prison for complicity in crimes against humanity, Papon was interned in La Santé prison following the collapse of his subsequent appeal and an abortive escape to Switzerland. In 2001, the European court of human rights rejected Papon's plea that his incarceration at the age of ninety constituted inhumane treatment.¹⁶ However, the campaign to free him on health grounds was finally successful in September 2002, reigniting the old public controversies.

For many, the verdict at Papon's trial was a fudge of the most basic question posed concerning French state responsibility for crimes against humanity. In a recent article, American historian Richard Golsan argues that 'an aura of failure' hangs over the trial as 'the specificity of Vichy, its crimes and the nature and the meaning of collaboration with the Nazis were obscured by competing interpretations of the symbolism of the trial and the historical circumstances it was intended to illuminate'.¹⁷ Inevitably, the trial could not provide precise answers to the questions of knowledge, responsibility and guilt in the Final Solution that are still debated by historians today. Yet, as Golsan argues persuasively in his article, the Papon trial and other major commemorative events from the late 1990s were more properly 'failures' in the sense that they exhibited 'an inability to put the past to rest, to draw lessons from the past or, more optimistically, to draw inspiration from that past'.¹⁸ In the case of Papon, this was largely due to the fact that he refused to act as the scapegoat of French state collaboration. For Papon, the Vichy civil servant, could claim not only a dubious 'resistance' pedigree but also a long-standing allegiance to de Gaulle and Gaullism in the post-war period which included his now infamous role as Paris prefect of police from 1958–67 (see below).

The extent to which the legacy of the resistance had been misappropriated by post-war elites resurfaced during the trial with Papon's claims to have been a card-carrying member of the resistance. Indeed,

in 1958, he was officially awarded a *carte de combattant volontaire de la Résistance* (Voluntary Resistance Fighter's Card), albeit at the third attempt. Already in 1981, the publication of a damning dossier in the left-wing satirical newspaper, *Le Canard enchaîné*, had forced Papon to prove these 'resistance' credentials. At Papon's request, in the same year, a committee of prominent resisters was convened to substantiate his resistance claims. This committee confirmed that the evidence provided by Papon attested to his affiliation to a resistance network from January 1943. However, the committee also expressed regret that Papon had not seen fit to resign from his post under Vichy.¹⁹ At the trial in 1998, Papon's version of events was that he had played a double game in working as a Vichy civil servant whilst helping the resistance. This was much contested and after testimony by several witnesses, it would seem that Papon's activities boiled down to vague contacts with passing agents and helping find accommodation for a number of those affiliated to the resistance network Jade-Amicol.

If this tentative affirmation of Papon's 'resistance' actions were not enough to obscure and complicate the image of Papon the collaborator, his post-war administrative career discredited the very Gaullist ideals of honour, liberty and democracy in whose name he was being prosecuted. During his trial, Papon presented himself as a faithful post-war Gaullist, an allegiance that other Gaullists who testified at the trial fervently opposed, interpreting this as a ploy to discredit de Gaulle. However, the facts of Papon's post-war career certainly gave credence to the view that his glittering administrative career had been at least tacitly endorsed, and certainly not hindered, by de Gaulle. He had remained in post after the liberation and held a number of high-ranking administrative posts in the French colonies during the 1950s. In 1958, a month before the founding of the Fifth Republic and the return to power of de Gaulle, he was nominated Paris prefect of police, a post he retained under the new administration. It was as the representative of the forces of law and order under a Gaullist regime that Papon oversaw the brutal repression of 17 October 1961, when those demonstrating against the imposition of a night-time curfew for Algerians Muslims were set upon by the police. Reports of bloodshed on the streets of Paris were largely censored at the time as the authorities sought to hush up witness accounts of extreme police brutality.²⁰ The intrusion of other shameful moments in French history such as this further appeared to undermine the legitimacy of a court of the Fifth Republic to sentence Papon. As at the Barbie trial, Papon and his defence team worked with some success to highlight uncomfortable

points of convergence that tarnished the reputation of de Gaulle and Gaullism to act as the moral arbiters of the nation.

The connections that the Papon trial threw up between post-war Gaullism and the Vichy regime implied that both had sanctioned murderous acts in the name of state security. This clearly presents a distortion of the historical record, casting post-war Gaullism in a negative light. However, the trial was taking place at a time when more sceptical readings of the Fifth Republic's record on human rights were gaining ground in both literary and historical circles. Cultural histories of French decolonization are now being written that focus on repressive French policies abroad and their effects on mainstream French society.²¹ Prominent and best-selling writers, such as Didier Daeninckx, have made their reputations from exposing, in a fictional format, the administrative trajectory of career civil servants such as Papon.²² What has taxed writers, historians and commentators has been the responsibility of the French state in various guises (Vichy and the Fifth Republic) for long-unacknowledged crimes against humanity. It has become increasingly apparent that the Gaullist myth has failed to provide either a glorious image of the past or to act as the yardstick by which other regimes and political practices can be judged. The Papon trial showed once again that France could not hold up a mirror to its past and expect to see an image, over fifty years later, which did not also implicate some of the founding tenets of the Fourth and Fifth Republics.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the complex itineraries of two men and two reputations. Moulin, the martyred hero of a Gaullist resistance, has provided successive post-war French elites with a model of republican commitment and sacrifice to inspire future generations. Papon, the disgraced civil servant and state administrator who put his careerist aims before basic human rights, has been held up as an example of how not to act in the face of oppression. Yet both figures have played a part in the slow demise of a Gaullist image of France's heroic past. Moulin's canonized memory, through its appropriation by various groups of historians and journalists, has fractured in the 1990s, showing just how fragile was the edifice of the Gaullist myth of the 1950s and 1960s. Papon, the Janus-faced figure of French post-war administration, has dealt such a construction the *coup de grâce*. By deliberately foregrounding French police responses to the demonstration of 17 October 1961,

his trial undermined the record of successive post-war governments who drew their moral legitimacy from the war period. In very different ways then, these two men have been pivotal in encouraging a re-evaluation of heroic visions of the resistance which seem to have outlasted their usefulness as a rallying cry for the nation.

These visions were based upon the view of the resistance as a heroic national struggle against nazi aggression in the name of democracy and freedom, and reflected the founding values of the Republic and French republicanism. As this myth has disintegrated, the very moral legitimacy and authority of the state has come under attack. And such attacks have intensified in recent years with, for example, revelations concerning the role of French armed forces in the Algerian War. Indeed, the recent revelations of murder and torture in *Le Monde* by Generals Massu and Aussaresses implicate former high-ranking ministers of the republican state in crimes against humanity.²³ Thus, it is not only present and future economic and political change, bound up with the forces of globalization and European integration, that challenges the French state. The nation's republican credentials and moral authority as the 'country of human rights' are also placed under the microscope through an examination of the past.

In conclusion, we can ask where France stands as it continues to experience the consequences of its wartime past. Is this period *un passé qui ne passe pas* – a past that will not pass away – as Eric Conan and Henry Rousso have named it?²⁴ The legacy of France's wartime past has taken on such a variety of permutations in the 1990s that any attempt at a prediction would be foolish. Looking to other nations and other cultures, it would seem that France is not alone in its obsession with its wartime past. In recent years and months, we have witnessed the inflation of America's war record in Hollywood blockbusters such as *Saving Private Ryan* and *Pearl Harbor*. Perhaps more disturbing are the new history textbooks produced by revisionist Japanese historians. These attempt to rewrite the history of the Asian region, alternately glorifying and denying twentieth-century Japanese military aggression. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits in 2001, 2002 and 2003 to the Yasukuni shrine, the symbolic home of Japanese nationalism and the resting place of seven Japanese class A war criminals from the Second World War, served to fan the flames yet further.²⁵ It would seem that Japan as a nation remains wedded to myths of its wartime past as a means of shoring up its shaky status as a world economic heavyweight. Its case illustrates just how important mythical interpretations of the war years are in redefining the present-day identity of countries in

crisis. Assured of economic stability as part of the expanding European Union and with a sense of cultural heritage reinforced by two centuries of French republican tradition, France is not a nation teetering on such a precipice. Nevertheless, with French political traditions and institutions undergoing a process of renewal if not reinvention, France's wartime past continues to operate as a trigger for a whole series of debates over French identity in the past, present and future.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the treatment of the Aubracs and the debates generated in the French historical community in the late 1990s, see H. Diamond and C. Gorrara, 'The Aubrac Controversy', *History Today*, 51/3 (March 2001), 26–7.
2. For Rousso's pioneering work on the Vichy Syndrome, see H. Rousso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy: de 1944 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).
3. *Ibid.*
4. H. Freney, *La Nuit finira* (Paris: Laffont, 1973) and *L'Enigme Jean Moulin* (Paris: Laffont, 1977).
5. Rousso, *op. cit.*
6. G. Chauvy, *Lyon: Aubrac 1943* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997).
7. For a full transcript of the round table discussion and the response of the major participants, see www.liberation.fr/aubrac.
8. D. Cordier, *Jean Moulin: l'inconnu du Panthéon*, Vols I–III (Paris: J.C. Lattès, 1989–1993); *La République des catacombes* (Paris: J.C. Lattès, 1999).
9. T. Wolton, *Le Grand Recrutement* (Paris: Grasset, 1993).
10. J. Baynac, *Les Secrets de l'affaire Moulin* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).
11. Pierre Péan was well known for his exposé of Mitterrand's wartime past in *Une jeunesse française. François Mitterrand 1934–1947* (Paris: Fayard, 1994). He turned to the legendary status of Moulin in the late 1990s, publishing a conventional account of Moulin as a faithful Gaullist in *Vies et morts de Jean Moulin* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), but following this with the decidedly more sensationalist *La Diabolique de Caluire* (Paris: Fayard, 1999).
12. For an Anglo-Saxon perspective, see P. Marnham, *The Death of Jean Moulin: Biography of a Ghost* (London: John Murray, 2000).
13. See M. Martin, Chapter 10.
14. For a stimulating and well-documented discussion of the Papon trial, see the chapter 'Memory on Trial in Contemporary France', in N. Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Trauma in Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), pp. 113–42.
15. In February 1997, Claude Berri released the film *Lucie Aubrac*, a heavily romanticized reworking of Lucie Aubrac's semi-autobiographical text, *Ils partiront dans l'ivresse* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), based on nine months of her life as a resister and mother during the occupation. French people were confronted with extremely different images of the occupation at a highly sensitive time as the Papon trial drew near. For a close reading of the film in the context of the 1990s, see G. Hayes, 'Résistancialisme Revisited:

- Masculinity and National Identity in Claude Berri's *Lucie Aubrac*, *Studies in French Cinema*, 1/2 (September 2001), pp. 108–17.
16. See 'Pour la cour européenne, la détention de Maurice Papon n'est pas inhumaine' in *Le Monde*, 9 June 2001.
 17. R. Golsan, 'Contextualizing the Politics of Memory and the End of Ideology in the Nineties: Reflections on the Commemoration of May 1968, the Papon Trial and the Debate over *Le Livre noir du communisme*', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 41/1 (Spring 2001), 21–33 (23–4).
 18. *Ibid.*, 24.
 19. For a detailed if highly partisan account of the trial and post-war career of Papon, see J.-J. Gandini, *Le Procès Papon* (Pössneck: EJL Libro, 1999). Gandini highlights the phrase used by the committee of inquiry 'au vu des seuls documents produits' [from looking only at the documents provided] to underline how the committee relied solely on evidence provided by Papon. Clearly for Gandini, the provenance of the documentation challenged the validity of the committee's judgement.
 20. Even today, the actual death toll is still the subject of some debate. An official report was commissioned by Lionel Jospin in 1997 after courtroom revelations at the Papon trial about the October 1961 demonstration. It was made public after the trial in May 1998.
 21. See K. Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).
 22. For a discussion of his novel *Meurtres pour mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, Série Noire, 1984), see C. Gorrara, 'Meurtres pour mémoire: Remembering the Occupation in the Detective Fiction of Didier Daeninckx', *Journal of the Institute of Romance Studies* (1998).
 23. See F. Beauge, 'Je me suis résolu à la torture ... J'ai moi-même procédé à des exécutions sommaires', *Le Monde*, 23 November 2000, 11, and P. Georges, 'Dire, enfin', *Le Monde*, 23 November 2000, 35.
 24. H. Rousso and E. Conan, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Seuil, 1995).
 25. See 'Japan's Rising Nationalism Enrages Asia', *Observer*, 15 July 2001, and 'Japan Snores through Pearl Harbour', *New Statesman*, 23 July 2001, 35–6 for an outline of the controversy.

Conclusion

Susan Milner and Nick Parsons

What will be remembered of the 1997–2001 period, experienced intensely at Matignon in time to the beat of the country? Will this period, which straddled a century and even a millennium ... be seen to have marked the beginning of a new era, or just another phase in our history, dense and dynamic but in the end slipping into the flow of events making up the past, without fundamentally changing their course?¹

The changes described in this book point to a country undergoing large-scale transition, but at the same time attempting to preserve traditional ways of doing things: in other words, a reinvention of French society and politics which implies adaptation of existing institutions and modes of behaviour to a changed external environment. How far this reinvention represents real change remains an open question, as does the ability of the political class to keep pace with social change and societal demands.

As we have seen, the Jospin government attempted to recreate the social contract, but the contributors to this volume argue that policy innovation and elite restructuring have been far too timid. The elections of 2002 revealed the yawning gap between politicians and voters, with abstention rates at record levels and unprecedented levels of support for extremist candidates. They also showed a society uneasy with itself, internally divided and suspicious, and also apparently afraid to address external questions such as European integration and Europe's role in international affairs. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, as sovereignty is eroded by economic globalization and European integration, the French state has faced the problem of adapting its republican model of

social organization in order to face up to the social and political tensions brought about by internal and external changes.

The 2002 presidential elections: republicanism under threat?

The first national elections of the twenty-first century in France indicated that state elites have not been successful in managing change, and that the perceived threats to French identity from multiculturalism on the one hand and European integration and economic globalization on the other have led to increased social and political tensions. The 17 per cent polled by Jean-Marie Le Pen in the first round of the presidential election on 21 April 2002 sent shock waves through French politics and society. Including Le Pen's former ally Bruno Mégret, the extreme right amassed over 19 per cent of the vote, and its share of the poll increased by nearly 900,000 votes compared to 1995, when it had already amassed 4.57 million. Even if the leader of the *Front national* (FN) had toned down his xenophobic discourse in 2002, a significant proportion of the French electorate appeared to be rejecting multiculturalism and European integration in favour of policies emphasizing national sovereignty, national preference and a French identity based upon ethnic origin. But a substantial proportion of the 2002 vote for Le Pen must also be seen as a protest vote and a rejection of the French way of 'doing politics'.

Mainstream candidates on both left and right of the political spectrum suffered at the hands of the electorate. The major loser was the PS candidate, Lionel Jospin, who only won 16 per cent of the vote, compared to 23 per cent seven years earlier: a loss of 1.8 million votes. The other major left party of government, the PCF, saw its candidate, Robert Hue, fare equally badly, losing nearly two-thirds of its voters since 1995. On the other hand, opposition left candidates did remarkably well: the dissident left republican, Pierre Chevènement (5.3 per cent), the Radical Left Party candidate, Christiane Taubira (2.3 per cent) and the Green candidate Noël Mamère (5.2 per cent) won nearly 13 per cent between them, while the three far left candidates accounted for a further 10.5 per cent. In other words, support for left-wing republican values appeared to hold good, while the government in office was sanctioned, as was the incumbent president. In total, traditional parties of government received less than two-thirds (63 per cent) of the votes cast. Allied to this, the abstention rate broke all records for the first round of a presidential election, with over 11 million people, out of an electorate of 40 million, not voting.

The French electorate's rejection of traditional ways of 'doing politics' in France can be explained by several factors. Firstly, it is not surprising that traditional governing parties are sanctioned at the polls when a state that has remained relatively highly centralized fails to address public concerns over matters such as crime and (despite the relative success of Jospin) continuing high levels of unemployment. Two decades of alternation between left and right in government, and frequent periods of *cohabitation*, mean that both sides of the political divide are affected in this respect. In addition, the blurring of ideological distinctions and public perceptions that there is little to choose between the mainstream left and right lead many to the conclusion that neither presents an attractive or viable alternative to remedy the problems of French society. *Cohabitation* has also undoubtedly reinforced such perceptions of impotent governing elites, unable to act decisively or quickly, as Jack Hayward remarks in this volume. Secondly, political institutions in France have been discredited by the actions of some office-holders. The numerous political and financial scandals that have hit France over the last two decades have weakened the moral legitimacy of state representatives, and by extension the institutions of the Republic themselves. Such discredit runs all the way up to the presidency, accounting in part for the low score obtained by Chirac on 21 April 2002.

In some ways, the results of the first round of the 2002 presidential elections – and certainly the rally to the Republic between the two rounds – may be seen as a wish to reassert a French republican identity in the face of homogenizing trends associated with European integration and economic globalization. Ruling elites were effectively sanctioned for a perceived failure to do this. Indeed, this is not the first time this has happened. Jospin came to power in 1997 on the back of the 1995 protests against then prime minister Alain Juppé's plans to reform the social security system, which were seen as a threat to France's generous provision under pressure from the neo-liberal economic policies of the EU in the run-up to monetary union. Threats to pensions, redundancies in multinational companies and debates over the future of public services have revived such concerns.

In his contribution to this volume, Jack Hayward remarks that the French state tends to move from inertia to change only under great pressure. It is interesting, then, that the *Le Monde* editorialist Jean-Marie Colombani referred to the mass mobilization which followed 21 April 2002 as an 'electoral May-68'.² Could, then, the shock of Jean-Marie Le Pen's presence in the second round of the presidential

elections lead to a renewal of the republican pact between state and citizens in France?

The Jospin government: the unravelling of the republican pact?

The 'plural left' government, like the twenty-first century whose arrival it celebrated, began in a climate of prosperity and optimism but ended in a phase of economic downturn and the international turbulence signalled by the 11 September 2001 attacks. The chapters in this book have discussed some of the reforms introduced by the Jospin government, which sought to make a 'new republican pact' with the French people. The return to the 'republican spirit' which Jospin outlined in 1997 was defined as: civic education and measures to combat violence in schools, a policy of integration of immigrant populations, renovation of public services and modernization of political life, and a macro-economic policy aimed at growth and jobs.³ These four areas have been examined in various chapters in the present volume.

First, it must remain doubtful as to whether the citizenship education described by Hugh Starkey in this volume will be sufficient to overcome the growing disaffection among young people. Indeed, Starkey points to an ethnic dimension to anti-school violence, linked to the fact that the highly selective French education system too often fails pupils of foreign origin. Unless education reforms address this problem, and unless the social and economic discrimination felt by ethnic minorities – particularly where labour market access is concerned – is reduced, if not entirely overcome, citizenship education can hardly hope to succeed in its aim of combating disaffection for republican institutions. Rather, the contradiction between the republican rhetoric of equality and solidarity on the one hand, and the reality of social and economic inequalities and discrimination on the other, will only become more evident to the young generations. The result will only be further reinforcement of communitarian identities and a concomitant disaffection for the republican institutions that they see as incapable of ensuring their effective integration into the national community.

French schools and the state are, however, rising to this challenge. Once the cradle of state secularism (*laïcité*) and of French republican values, they are becoming far more flexible in their application of these doctrines. The tensions between a secular education system in which all pupils were treated equally and an increasingly multiracial society first came to public attention in Creil, in 1989, with the exclusion from school of Muslim girls wearing the veil. Perceived by the school's

headmaster as an 'ostentatious' religious symbol, such a manifestation of a particular religious identity was seen as incompatible with the secular values of the French education system. On 27 November 1989 the *Conseil d'Etat* ruled, in the name of the freedom of opinion and expression, that the wearing of religious symbols was compatible with the secular nature of schooling provided that it did not perturb the functioning of the school and could not be considered to be an action of proselytism. Since these events, schools have become far more flexible in their tolerance of religious identities and the practices associated with them. While problems remain in certain areas, such as the teaching of subjects such as biology or physical education, schools have, in many cases, tried to accommodate the different dietary demands emanating from different communities – for example for halal or kosher meat – and have even managed to take into account the effects of Ramadan on Muslim pupils.⁴ From being an anti-clerical notion in the nineteenth century, state secularism has now become more neutral under the pressure of demands based upon different cultural identities. Indeed, since 1996, the history of religions has been part of the secondary school syllabus in the secular school.

Second, integration of generations of young people from immigrant family backgrounds constitutes one of the biggest challenges to French society today. The contribution of Michèle Tribalat to this volume suggests that real change is occurring in this area due to a process of mutual learning and reinvention. With the passing of generations, populations of foreign origin still want to retain their cultural identity, but are more and more willing to conform to French customs and practices, especially as far as language and family life are concerned. On the part of the state, the study carried out by INED with the collaboration of INSEE under the direction of Tribalat herself, and upon which much of her contribution is based, is itself significant as one of the first state-funded surveys based upon different ethnic groupings within the French nation. However, as she argues in her conclusion, there is still a long way to go before public authorities feel confident enough to broach racial monitoring, and therefore policies aimed at redressing structural inequality remain impossible. Meanwhile, the material conditions in which young people of immigrant origin live – spatial segregation of resources – perpetuate inequality. In effect young people of immigrant origin often turn towards identification with radical forms of religious identity at odds with the values of a republic that is increasingly unable to ensure their economic or social integration, let alone equality, through the provision of employment, and refuses

them any form of institutional communitarian expression in the name of universalism.

In fact, very little was done during the 1997–2002 period to promote positive integration of populations of immigrant origin. The principle of *jus soli* was reintroduced and most of the illegal immigrants demanding regularization (the '*sans-papiers*' whose continued protests embarrassed the left government) were eventually granted leave to stay, but the government's rejection of around one-third of applications angered Green government supporters and others on the left. The anti-discrimination measures passed in 2000 amounted to the first real recognition of the scale of the problems faced by youth from disadvantaged, particularly immigrant, families. But they fell short of creating bodies with statutory powers, relying instead on telephone help-lines and individual action. The Jospin government considerably increased funding for run-down city neighbourhoods (the '*politique de la ville*') where, as Tribalat shows in this volume, the majority of young people of immigrant origin live. But despite the increases the funding available was insufficient to tackle large-scale spatial inequalities. At the same time, by singling out these populations for special policies, the '*politique de la ville*' may have had the adverse effect of stigmatizing the people living in those areas.

Third, as highlighted above, the renewal of political and administrative life – a constant theme of political campaigning since the late 1980s – has been hesitant. Probably the biggest change brought in by Jospin was the ending of the *cumul des mandats*, whose ambiguous effects are discussed by Jack Hayward and Pierre Sadran in their chapters. The relationship between central government and the various levels of regional and local government did not settle down completely after the decentralization reforms of the 1980s, but continued to shift as a result of daily practice, periodic reform (such as the move towards clustering of communes or *intercommunalité*) and the changes brought about by European funding. The effect of the presidential *quinquennat* was even more ambiguous in 2002, when thanks to the inversion of the electoral calendar, the shock result of the first round and the well-aided public dislike of *cohabitation* the results of the legislative elections were seen to depend on the outcome of the presidential election. Disquiet about the first-round result of the presidential election (see below) opened up a longer-term debate about the institutions of the French Republic, and introduced a period of instability into French political life (as witnessed by the Raffarin government's speed in introducing reform of the Senate and the entire electoral system).

Finally, in legislating for a reduction of the legal working week to 35 hours in 1998 and 2000, the state explicitly placed the central republican values of equality and solidarity at the heart of the debate through the notion that a scarce commodity – employment – was to be more evenly distributed throughout the population. Such positive labour market action was seen as essential in order to combat social exclusion and promote integration through employment. Combined with public-sector job creation measures for young people – Martine Aubry's *emplois jeunes* – and improved economic growth, the Jospin government could claim a certain success in this area. In February 2002, there were 923,000 fewer unemployed in France than at the time of the socialists' election victory in June 1997. This included spectacular falls in the levels of unemployment amongst the most socially excluded: 480,000 fewer long-term unemployed (–42.5 per cent) and 202,000 fewer young unemployed (–34.4 per cent). Despite this improvement, unemployment and its attendant threat of social exclusion, including exclusion from rights to certain insurance-based welfare benefits, are still a reality for many French citizens: in February 2002, there were still 2,214,000 jobseekers in France, 9 per cent of the active population.⁵

Whilst acknowledging the innovative aspects of the working-time reforms, Marie-Christine Kok Escalle's chapter in this volume highlights the problems of their implementation, particularly the new inequalities to which they have given rise: between workers in different sectors, between the low paid and the better off, between men and women, and between workers in large and small companies. She also argues that the method of implementation left the government open to accusations of excessive interventionism and neglect of social dialogue, a theme which the right was quick to seize upon.

More generally, working-time reduction constituted the flagship reform of the Jospin government because it signified an assertion of the central role of the state and the primacy of politics over economics: the return of republican *volontarisme*. However, the markets had their revenge in the context of economic downturn at the end of 2001, and in response Jospin's presidential campaign in 2002 seemed to recognize the defeat of republican *volontarisme*, with its appeal to modernization. The other main example of the French government's assertion of state power was the call for 'economic government' as a necessary corollary of European monetary union. The failure of this proposal undoubtedly weighed heavy in the French public's assessment of the Jospin government, particularly as the constraining effects of the growth and stability pact on domestic budgetary policy became clear.⁶

Overall, republicanism as an integrating framework of egalitarian social values undoubtedly evolved during the period of the Jospin government, in response to societal pressures. The PACS, for example, was introduced in 1999 in response to the growing demands of the 'gay rights' movement for some form of institutional recognition for their relationships, but was presented as a reform that would provide an alternative to marriage for heterosexual, as well as homosexual, couples. In providing the same fiscal advantages to unmarried couples as are available to married couples, the PACS could be presented as a move towards greater equality for all citizens irrespective of marital status and as a necessary adjustment to social trends. In this way, the advancement of the demands of a particular community within the nation was reconciled with a universalist outlook rather than the granting of differential rights to special status groups.

The reconciliation of republican equality and the need to equalize the conditions of distinct groups within society has opened the way for a more thorough reappraisal of citizenship. The 1999 law on parity, whilst based on the idea of equalizing conditions, marked a fundamental shift in the way the state views citizenship. From being based on the individual and abstracting him or her from their social background, it has moved towards an acknowledgement of the necessary representation of groups in society. In other words, there is a recognition that the state cannot draw its legitimacy purely from the representation of abstract individuals, but must represent the constituent communities of society, especially where these suffer from perceived social, economic or political inequalities.

The institutional organization and expression of such identities appears to be more problematic where they are based upon ethnic or religious groupings, however. As Michael Martin has shown in this volume, the state has recognized the existence of a distinct Jewish community within the once 'one and indivisible' French nation. Following attacks on synagogues in Lyon and Marseilles in April 2002, Lionel Jospin recognized that 'we have the largest Jewish community in Europe and one of the largest Arabic-Islamic communities'.⁷ Republican discourse thus appears to be shifting from a universalist one that recognizes no intermediary between the citizen and the state to one that accepts the reality of different cultural identities within the same nation. Nevertheless, the integration of the different cultural communities would appear to be one of the greatest social challenges facing the French state at the start of the new millennium.

Towards a 'new governance' model?

Despite attempts to overcome the tensions and contradictions inherent in the French republican tradition, disaffection for its institutions is clearly evident, particularly among the young and populations of foreign origin, among whom high rates of abstention can be found at election times. Elections are fundamental to modern notions of citizenship not only because through them individuals participate in the designation of their leaders, but also because they represent a means of resolving conflicts of interest between different groups in society through the establishment of general norms after debate and compromise. As Sharon Collins argues in this volume, the decline in voter turnout at elections is not a rejection of political activity per se, but a rejection of the political institutions and parties that base their legitimacy on the representation of French citizens. Part of the problem is the tension inherent in the French political system between the need for a charismatic political leader able to forge a common vision for the country in the face of rising particularist identities and demands – seen in the semi-presidential system and to some extent in the system of elected mayoral 'notables' at local level – and the French people's expressed demand for a managerial response to bread-and-butter issues. Although local initiatives such as those examined by Collins in Nîmes may go some way towards 'reinventing' the active participation of citizens in public affairs, their replication at the national level, where disaffection is strongest, appears more problematic, due in part to the increasingly professional nature of political activity at that level.

The much-vaunted 'return to local roots' which was evident in the 2001 municipal elections and in the discourse of the Raffarin government after its nomination in 2002 appears to point to a new direction in French politics, away from the centralized state and towards a 'network' polity characterized by governance rather than government. Jean-Pierre Raffarin summarized the objectives of 'the new governance' as three-fold: 'to reassert the truth in politics through greater transparency, to demand efficiency by clarifying procedures, and to ensure greater openness through pluralistic access to decision-making'.⁸ The basic elements of this 'new governance' appear to be a strengthening of 'local democracy, social democracy and economic democracy': in other words, a more modest state (a plea echoed by Jack Hayward in this volume) and greater decentralization. It remains to be seen how far the Raffarin government will act to give citizens a real say in decision-making at all levels.

The reference to economic democracy means, as well as reliance on market mechanisms, an endorsement of the employers' desire to restructure the whole of the social protection and employment relations systems in France. Raffarin's reference to the '*refondation*' of state-society relations⁹ is not innocent. Beyond reinvention and reform, it implies a thorough recasting of the way social relations are embedded in the state. It echoes the employers' organization's programme of '*refondation sociale*' and in this sense departs from the classic republican conception of the state as guarantor and equalizer. Economic differences of interest between social groups would no longer be mediated through republican institutions, but would be regulated directly by the concerned social actors who would not need to refer to any notions of the general will or interest in their dealings with each other. Given the relative power of employers over trade unions in France, this is likely to result in an erosion of rights and a sharpening of inequalities.

In conclusion, then, it would appear that the French state has had to adapt, challenged from above by processes of economic globalization and European integration, and from below by the emergence of particular sectionalist identities. Although the universalist paradigm of French citizenship has not been entirely abandoned, it has undergone change. The notion of sovereignty has evolved, now being seen as something to be exercised in conjunction with other European states in an increasingly interdependent world economy, and it is now no longer exercised in the name of abstract individuals in the name of equality. Rather, there is now an acceptance on the left that inequalities that are rooted in concrete social situations require differential treatment and the recognition of the existence of different groups in society, each with their own values, interests and demands, whilst on the right the primacy of the market and the desire to decentralize will result in a widening of inequalities.

Above all, the present volume has highlighted the way in which appeals to change have become a staple feature of French politics. Less insistent and less uniform than Tony Blair's early endorsement of everything 'new', the references to reform, renewal, recasting, rethinking and reinvention signal subtle variations in politicians' standpoints on the adaptation–tradition continuum. But their constant presence is a reminder that France must act if it wants to retain its distinctive features; it cannot simply hold on to them.

Notes

1. O. Schramek, *Matignon Rive Gauche 1997–2001* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), p. 187.
2. *Le Monde*, 23 April 2002.

3. L. Jospin, 'La déclaration de politique générale', Assemblée Nationale, 7 June 1997.
4. See *Laïcité: une passion française. Le Monde Dossiers et Documents*, no. 308, April 2002.
5. *Le Monde, supplément Économie*, 3 April 2002.
6. On this, see B. Clift, 'The political economy of the Jospin government', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 10/3 (August 2003), 325–38.
7. *Le Monde*, 3 April 2002.
8. J.-P. Raffarin, *Pour une nouvelle gouvernance* (Paris and Montreal: L'Archipel), p. 139.
9. The term is very difficult to translate, approximating to 'recasting'.

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